



# *Painting in the U.S.A.*

BY ALAN D. GRUSKIN

1946

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To ♪ MARY GRUSKIN





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INTRODUCTION☞ Men and women of the various branches of the armed services lent color to the crowds attending the art exhibitions at museums and galleries throughout the country during the war years. Peace brought them in ever-greater numbers, with increased liberty and tension removed. It has been interesting to watch and talk with these men and women. They are going back to the towns and cities, to the farms and ranches, there to provide the leadership of the future. The military services of our great civilian army, of course, do encompass a cross section of our country, and we do know that many of these young people were gallery visitors before they donned the uniform. Many, however, never before had access to original works of art either by the great masters of the past or by leading contemporary artists. Perhaps they were curious. Possibly they were satisfying a long-felt urge inspired by the steadily increasing amount of space devoted to the arts by the nation's press. Or the many traveling exhibitions which find their way into the smallest towns and schools had whetted their appetites and given them the desire to see more and better works of art. Some, more familiar with what they saw, were trying to fix into memory the cultural treasure of their land before shipping off to strange lands, to unknown vicissitudes, for an unmeasured period

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of their lives. Still others back on furlough or for discharge sought in the world of art emotional release from recent harrowing experiences and sufferings. One marine told me he had seen the art of other countries and wanted to see that of his own. The keen appreciation of these service men and women, their questions, their appraisals, and passionate desire to know more, especially about American painters, started my thoughts on the direction of a book which might be of aid in answering some of their questions and might help to acquaint them with the important work being done in the field of contemporary American painting. It might give them a cross section of American painting today to look at, and instill in them pride in the long history of their country's artistic achievements. This picture book I planned would enable them to make their own appraisals to store away for the days when they would return to civilian life and become the leaders of cultural opinion in their communities, there to sow the seeds of a continued interest in the arts.

This, then, was the germinating influence. As the project became clearer to me, I felt that much more could be served by such a volume. Painting in America, in the period between the two great wars, has gone through violent disturbances which have considerably affected the aims of American artists now at work. Simultaneous with these changes there has developed a constantly increasing spread of interest in their work. Sincere and courageous art critics and writers have called attention to our better artists in newspapers, magazines and books. Millions of Americans who previously never gave painting a thought have been confronted in their popular magazines with the work of creative painters. Museums and art associations have been multiplying in remote communities throughout the land, exposing on their walls the latest trends in painting. Great business organizations have become art patrons, have incorporated fine art in their advertisements, and circulated collections of paintings. All this emphasis has aroused a curiosity which, if properly encouraged and guided, may develop a permanent and dis-

criminating patronage for the creative American artist. This volume with its many reproductions may be helpful in enabling readers to study and restudy the work of the many artists I have been able to include. Standards of criticism, likes and dislikes, thus established may prompt a desire for closer inspection of originals by the artists admired. A keener and more sympathetic appreciation of that for which present-day artists are striving may develop. Watching the steady growth of American painting during fifteen years of continuous and often heartbreaking effort to widen the interest in the work of the American artist, I have arrived at certain conclusions which may be of some benefit to members of this new audience—people who want to know more about American art and want to derive keener enjoyment from it.

There has been too little popular information about the beginnings of American painting, of the long history of trail blazing and achievement by our earlier painters. Our scholars in universities and museums have, with untiring energy, delved into the past and plucked out pertinent information concerning the sources and influences which have had directional effects on painting in this country. But too little of this is current knowledge or perhaps not often enough been repeated in our generation. Recent influences have been highly publicized and must definitely be taken into consideration. But a true picture of our art necessitates a knowledge of our national heritage. American painting began neither with the Impressionist influence, as some would like to believe, with the 1913 Armory Show as some would make us believe, nor with the recent American-scene vogue as chauvinists loudly proclaim.

Art patronage, too, with the various attempts to increase and promote interest in living painters has a long history in this country. A record of such activities may provide illuminating information. It may also suggest to the new audience for which I write that other neophytes have, from the earliest days of our nation, sought similar aesthetic satisfaction in the art of their contemporaries.


## INTRODUCTION

The illustrating of this book has been aided through the co-operation of the various publications who very kindly made their color plates available. *Life*, *Fortune*, *Art News*, *London Studio*, *American Artist*, The Upjohn Company, the Pepsi-Cola Company and the Capehart Company have lent color plates, and the *Art Digest* made available to me its photograph files which were all of invaluable aid in illustrating *Painting in the U.S.A.* The owners of the paintings, the artists responsible for their creation and their dealers who have helped bring the artists deserved attention, graciously permitted the use of these reproductions. Acknowledgment, too, should be made to the vital and intelligent artists with whom I am in daily contact, whose courageous striving for lofty goals in the face of countless obstacles has constantly inspired me to greater efforts in their behalf. The museum director who has mulled over his local problems with me, the secretary of the small-town art association who has written me of her trials and tribulations, the art writers with whom I am alternately agreeing and disagreeing, and the many authors who have preceded me, have all helped produce this book.

**PAINTING IN THE U.S.A.**





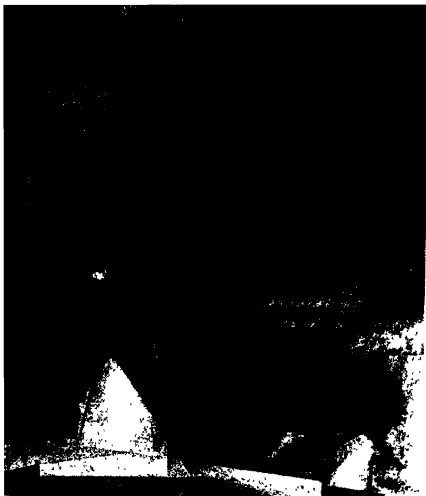
CHAPTER 18  Fear more than any other emotion has hampered the wider enjoyment of art in America—fear of erring in one's estimate of a work of art, fear of being ridiculed by friends or neighbors, fear of the horrified scorn of the professional decorator. So many times have I heard well-educated, culture-seeking individuals say to me, "I won't venture an opinion about these pictures as I know so little about art." Or, "I like that painting best, but I suppose it must be the worst picture in the exhibition if it appeals to me." This timidity often results in a defiant attitude. "I don't know anything about art so there is no point in my looking at pictures." While the wife makes the rounds of the gallery trying to enjoy the works of art spread before her, the husband who has made the aforementioned remarks sits morosely on a bench endeavoring to hide his lack of confidence behind a cynical bored look. Or, on the other hand, while the husband tours the gallery enjoying the paintings, his wife seeks to conceal her confusion with trite comments concerning the subject matter of the paintings, or with trivial gossip. Many thousands of cultured Americans, most of whom do not even get as far as galleries and museums, thus deprive themselves of pleasure that would enrich their lives and provide them with an intellectual stimulus which has been part of the cultural heritage of man for countless generations.

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The natural independence so characteristic of the American seems to disappear before a work of art. The followers of the school of thought implied in the hackneyed phrase, "I don't know anything about art but I know what I like," have taken such a beating in recent years that they manage the first half of the phrase and let it go at that. Awed by the often obscure and technical criticism of many art writers, disturbed by the violent changes in painting in recent years, the potential art enthusiast retires in confusion. There is little of the public excitement aroused by the unveiling of a new masterpiece such as occurred in Italy in the days of the Renaissance, or the hue and cry that followed the opening of an exhibition by the Impressionist innovators in Paris. The American too often is afraid to say what he honestly likes for fear that someone with more erudition may tell him that what he likes is bad. This attitude usually turns him in the direction of other interests. I have always suggested to a person thus perturbed that he is entitled to his likes and dislikes. But I take pains to point out to him that these preferences will be based on a more solid foundation as a result of greater familiarity with and considerably more study of good paintings. Paintings which appeal to him now may lose their flavor. Others may increase in appeal with the keener sense of appreciation that results from a sincere attempt to study good painting.

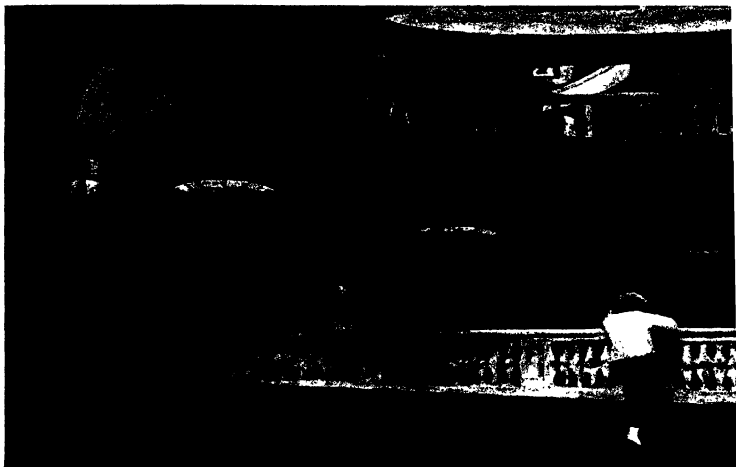
Through the medium of the radio, thousands of listeners have been exposed to good music. A larger audience for fine music has thus been created. Possibly television will do the same for art. It is conceivable that in the near future the collections of a great museum may thus be placed on view in your home, or an exhibition on view at a gallery can be televised into your living room. A flick of the wrist will make available for study and enjoyment by the whole family the best art being produced. We are led to believe from plans projected for the new enlarged Metropolitan Museum that instructive illustrated lectures will be brought by television from the large city museums.





arch, by Leonel Feuniger





*The Sheridan Theatre*, by Edward Hopper

11





*the Hills*, by Leon Kroll



*Jean in Blu*





*with a Purple Hat*, by Julien Binfoid



*The Passion According to St. A*



*Rock Falls*, by Marsden Hartley

*Heavy the Oar to Him Who Is Tired,  
Heavy the Coat, Heavy the Sea.*

by Ivan La Lorrain



In the meantime the audience for fine works of art is on the upswing, and to members of this audience it is suggested that only through persistent looking at good pictures will understanding come. By this I do not mean the rapid, casual glance around a gallery I have so often observed, but a deep, searching study of the pictures on the walls. The artist has devoted the major portion of his life to the task of developing the necessary technical equipment which will enable him fully to realize an original creative expression on canvas. He has usually spent years educating himself, years studying the great artists of the past, progressing through various experimental phases, until gradually he has evolved his own personal style.

He has tried to solve the problem which he has posed for himself with all the means at his command. Surely the work on which he has lavished so much care requires your closest scrutiny, demands that you, in turn, give the painting undivided attention. Only thus will you give yourself an opportunity to discover what the artist is seeking, to understand his reaction to the subject painted, and to derive for yourself that pleasurable satisfaction a good work of art should communicate. The various subtleties not immediately evident become apparent with closer study. The richness of color, the juicy handling of pigment, the successful organization of the elements in the picture among other attributes of a fine work of art all unfold through close and continued observation of a painting.

The visitor to a theater rarely leaves until the end of a performance, whatever the merits of the play. The dramatist is given undivided attention for almost three hours. The concertgoer, too, stays through the complete performance, never thinking of walking out on the soloist. Does not an exhibition demand similar attention? An artist usually spends anywhere from two to ten years producing the paintings included in a one-man exhibition. If an artist's exhibition is sufficiently important to invite a visit, the results of his labor surely merit more than a cursory glance and a sixty-second walk around a gallery. For the person seriously endeavoring to increase

his or her enjoyment of pictures there is nothing more helpful than looking again and again at pictures. There have appeared in recent years a number of good books on art which define the terms, examine the influences, plot the trends, and evaluate the various schools of painting. A bibliography on pages 213-15 lists many of these books recommended for study. They will be helpful if used after you have attentively considered the reproductions, and originals whenever possible. This, of course, is essentially a picture book. It is just such a book because its purpose is primarily to persuade readers to look and keep looking at pictures. It is hoped that the reproductions contained herein will lead to the closer examination of originals by these and other artists with the result that they may eventually provide the true aesthetic satisfaction sought.

Reproduced in this volume are paintings by many of the leading artists working in America today. It has not been possible, of course, to include the works of all the progressive American painters. There will be differences of opinion both as to inclusions and omissions. An attempt has been made to give a cross section of various trends taken by our better contemporary painters. Some paintings to which I feel somewhat apathetic are included because they help complete the survey. Other artists who might very well have added to the volume's completeness were omitted for no other reason than lack of space. Thus the work of a number of fine painters whose inclusion had been contemplated suffered elimination. However, a certain amount of bias, based on personal taste, must enter into any such selection, and the author accepts that responsibility.

If this book is used to help one's appreciation of painting, some of the following suggestions may point the way:

Study these reproductions. Select those you like best. Look at them again and again, until you have developed reasons of your own for preferring those pictures. Consider again those which did not at first appeal to you. Perhaps with greater familiarity and tolerance your estimates will be revised. Then go to the galleries of your

nearest museum or art association and search for originals by these same artists, if available. If they are to be found in the original, see if you can find those qualities you have admired in reproductions of the work of the same artists. Using the same yardstick, apply it to the work of other artists. Then study the work of the great painters of the past. Try to discover why they have weathered the judgment of time and are still held in high regard. If originals are not available, look at good reproductions until such time as you have an opportunity to study original works. There are many art books available to give you a historical background which will enable you to place the different artists of various periods in their proper perspective. They will inform you of man's first artistic strivings from the early cave paintings of prehistoric man, of the beginnings of various art movements in different parts of the world, of the constant endeavor of artists of many lands to express themselves and their times. You will begin to understand the influences which affect the artist today and will see how he digests these influences to evolve a personal means of expression.


Your judgments will change with an evolution of taste. It is the same in all the related arts. In music and literature, the obvious and superficial which make little demands on the intellect are most easily comprehended. Popular melodies and pulp fiction, however, lose their appeal as you become more familiar with the great symphonies, with the important production of serious authors. The Maxfield Parrish which used to hang in most college students' rooms gives way to reproductions of more important works of art as the treasures of the past and present awaken the students' sensibilities to better pictures.

Subject matter is another stumbling block in the path to greater enjoyment of art. The literal representation of a lovely landscape once seen and pleasantly remembered is not necessarily a fine work of art. It may be nothing more than a technically able copy of nature by one who has learned the tools of the painting trade. Subject mat-

ter, however, is not therefore unimportant. What the artist brings to that subject matter, how he expresses his reaction to it, with what talent he organizes the essential elements of the material before him into a harmoniously integrated entity, are of primary importance. The painter who stands before his easel has many complex problems to solve. He is confronted with the limitations and possibilities inherent in the medium and the two-dimensional canvas on which he works. How he resolves these problems, what new personal approach he brings to the solution, and how he communicates his reaction to the subject matter, determine the success of his picture. Technical virtuosity is to be looked for but it is not all-important. Naturally the fine painter strives to use the tools of his trade with all possible ease and facility. Too many painters have sought perfection in the use of painting tools as a goal rather than as a medium for aesthetic expression. The eloquence of an orator is pleasing to the ear, but it is the substance and meaning of his words which make a lasting impression. The distortion and simplification of the ablest of today's progressive painters are predicated on their knowledge of the tools with which they work. They have equipment of fine draftsmanship, good color, knowledge of the disposition of space, and the like. It is this background which enables them to simplify, to take liberties, to distort meaningfully, and to organize plastically. The ability to surround objects painted with atmosphere through appropriate use of color, the employment of sound workmanship, correct drawing, novel subject matter are all to be admired, not for themselves alone, but by reason of their contribution to the success of the artist's goal. Occasionally an artist appears whose creative power is so strong that he produces fine, sometimes great art, despite certain technical weaknesses.

This has led some painters to the conclusion that they can take a short cut to success by imitating certain mannerisms of the great innovators. The mannerists and eclectics clothed in the ill-fitting garb of the creative French modernists, who clamor for attention

in this country today, are as academic as their uninspired brethren who fill the halls of the academy with faded memories of the past. Poor selection often places these facile superficialities on the same walls with work by serious painters who are endeavoring to find a new approach that will best express the spirit of the age in which they live. Other artists without training and the necessary technical equipment have attempted to make a fetish of their lack of knowledge, or, innocently, have had others do the same thing for them. This accounts for the recent vogue of "contemporary primitives." The naïve charm of the untutored has beguiled a few collectors who endeavor thus to put a premium on mediocrity. The infrequent primitive with something individual to report will occasionally appear, and will be given a hearing. Most should be encouraged to paint for their own private delectation or advised to seek instruction. As a matter of fact, the truly original untutored artist who frequently appears on the art scene soon tends to improve the quality of his painting through greater knowledge gained either by self-instruction or through contact with friendly professional painters.

CHAPTER II  The facilities at hand for widening one's knowledge of the entire field of art are so much greater today that it is usually a simple matter for the serious minded to come in contact with original works of art. Public museums, university and municipal art associations are constantly springing up. In 1898 the first edition of the *American Art Annual* listed 207 museums and art societies in the United States and Canada. The current volume lists 2,113 such organizations in this country, 91 in Canada, and 545 in the Latin-American countries.

Local and traveling exhibitions are regularly scheduled by these organizations. Through circulating exhibitions the best of our contemporary production is circuited to the smaller cities and towns. After a national exhibition like that at the Corcoran Gallery in



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Washington, D.C., which biennially presents recent paintings by leading American artists, a selection of a smaller group of paintings is made from the show. These begin a national circuit which may last for a year, or often longer. A similar circuit follows the International Water-color and Drawing Show held annually at the Art Institute of Chicago. Many other comprehensive exhibitions make the trek from one end of the country to the other, from city to town. The writer for more than a decade has similarly selected shows of works of art in various media by contemporary American artists and sent them traveling across the land. The large national exhibitions in New York, Washington, Chicago, Pittsburgh, Richmond, St. Louis, et cetera, attract audiences of millions while local state and city exhibitions swell the attendance figures.

Unfortunately for the artist this vast audience has not until recently meant a resultant increase in sales. The acquisitive instinct lay dormant as fine paintings furnished entertainment and conversation, but not pictures, for our best homes. For some reason the president of the local art association took more pride in securing an exhibition for her art association gallery than in acquiring a single picture for permanent installation on the walls of that gallery. Impressive buildings would be erected—large sums raised for the purpose without a thought given to a collection to fill the year-round cultural needs of the community. I have seen large sums expended year after year by museums for annual exhibitions, but strangely enough not a cent could be found to retain a single one of the pictures in the exhibition which had been so much admired locally.

The artist is told that the publicity will be beneficial, that he is helping to educate a new audience of potential buyers. That is probably true, but artists must eat and pay bills as do insurance men, truckers, railroad employees, and printers. These art societies often invite a concert violinist or pianist to play in their gallery, but though he may be considerably inferior in national repute as an artist to the painter whose pictures adorn the walls, his high fee is

paid with no questions asked. The insurance company, the packers, the express company, the lecturer, all pocket their fees, but the artist who makes all this possible receives back his painting, frame battered, canvas scratched. He has the dubious consolation that a great many people have seen and enjoyed his work.

The number, however, of more acquisition-minded organizations has been growing in recent years. Purchases and gifts by altruistic patrons are enabling art organizations to make permanently available to their members outstanding works of art. Often we find some of the choicest collections of the work of our contemporary artists in smaller cities. For more than fifty years the art association at Lincoln, Nebraska, has been holding an annual exhibition of contemporary American artists, and purchasing a certain number of paintings each year from the exhibition. Today Nebraska possesses one of the country's finest collections of American art. In 1942 the Swope Art Gallery opened in Terre Haute, Indiana. Under the wise administration of a progressive young director it accumulated in a short time, at comparatively small expense, a choice group of paintings and sculptures which brought national renown to this infant art museum.

The nation's large museums offer excellent opportunities to study every phase of man's artistic efforts through the ages. Contemporary American art is widely shown. In New York, at the Metropolitan Museum, can be found the Hearn Collection of American painting. Through the Hearn Fund, the museum has acquired paintings by leading American contemporaries. Down on Eighth Street, at the Whitney Museum, one of the motivating forces behind the current increased interest in living American art, you will find possibly the nation's most comprehensive collection of American painting. The Museum of Modern Art also has a number of Americans in its collection in addition to its fine examples by the leading French modernists, which are usually available for inspection.

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These and public collections in other cities are excellent sources for increasing one's awareness of the vital work being done today by our painters. The changing exhibitions at these museums, affording an opportunity to see examples in their permanent collections, attract to their galleries thousands from every section of America. Attendance figures are of interest. In ten years, attendance at New York's Metropolitan Museum has increased from 1,140,150 in 1935 to 1,674,009 in 1944. That year showed an increase of 30 per cent over 1943. In 1945 visitors numbered 1,826,353.

The commercial galleries, especially those in the vicinity of New York's Fifty-seventh Street, are continuously presenting exhibitions of the finest contemporary art. Here in group and one-man shows the leading American painters and those aspiring for attention may be studied and evaluated. The popular magazines with their great circulations have contributed to the growing interest in our artists. These magazines have an opportunity to reach millions who might otherwise never come in contact with matters pertaining to art. Readers are confronted with reproductions of fine paintings which appear between photographs of recent news events. Natural curiosity thus exposes them to the latest developments in the art of today and to the great works of art owned in this country. This is passive education but nevertheless effective. The man who has been weaned on the pin-up-girl type of magazine cover and bad calendar art eventually comes to accept the new in art just as he has learned to take as a matter of course, through constant association, towering skyscrapers, streamlined autos, and more recently rocket planes.

*Life* magazine has been a tremendous force in bringing art to the masses, and judging from the reaction of the readers, the art features have become a necessary part of the magazine. During the war, paintings sent back to *Life* from the battlefields throughout the world have accustomed readers to see the war through the

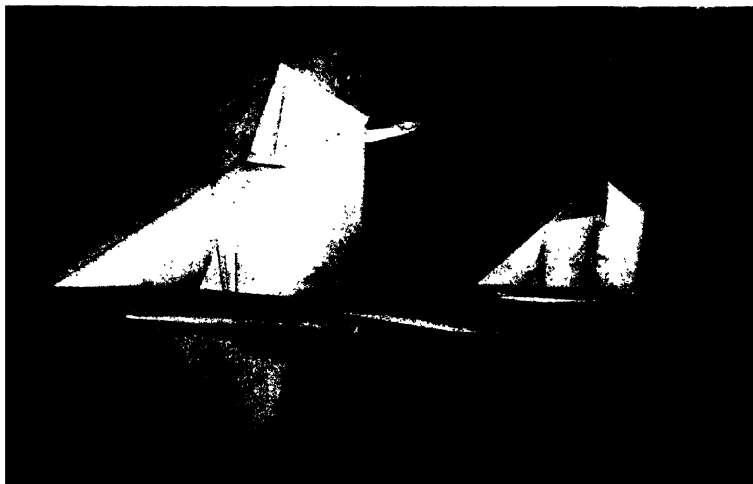


*Lunch*



*Avenue*, by Louis Bosa

*The Glorious Victory of the Sloop Maria*, by Lionel I





*Peggy Bacon and Metaphys*



one, by Raymond Brechin

Upper House, by William Gropper





*Punshi*





*hattan*, by John Mann



*I Got a Harp*, by Dan





*Sun in Landscape*, by William C. Palmer

*Winter*, by Henry Botkin



*Winter Peak*, by Boardman Robinson




eyes of talented contemporary artists. Readers will thus be better able to accept future work by these same and other fine artists in the years of peace we hopefully expect. *Esquire* magazine, with its lengthy illustrated feature stories on the lives of American painters sandwiched between fiction, humor, and pin-up girls; *Time* and *Newsweek*, with their up-to-the-minute happenings in Art; *Fortune*, with its impressive portfolios of paintings and its articles illustrated by creative painters, all familiarize the lay public with the art of today. Germs thus spread often invite a closer inspection of the art pages of local newspapers and may inspire visits to local exhibits.

The art magazines on which an unbelievable amount of talent and tireless energy are expended unfortunately reach a too limited audience. They are lavishly illustrated and keep one abreast of the art happenings, exhibitions, and new movements in art. Greater circulation for these magazines would do much to strengthen and solidify the growing interest in art in this country.

However, this book, these illustrations, all this writing about art can only serve as guideposts on the road to understanding of art. They will endeavor to point to those elements to be looked for in a painting. They will give you the background of the artist, the influences that determine the trend of his art, and an estimate of his technical achievement. But it is the original painting itself that must communicate the thrill that a fine work of art should give. Wearing by the physical effort, mentally exhausted, and depressed by mediocrity, I have often walked through large exhibitions. Suddenly I stop dead in my tracks, as though held by some exterior force. One picture in a long line of canvases has attracted my attention. Weariness is gone. There is the thrill of recognition—a fine picture. It may be a small canvas, not unusual in subject matter, but it has given me a communicable glow of pleasure, an emotional uplift that makes all the effort of the afternoon worth while. Only after stopping to study the painting in detail am I

able to analyze it, to discover just what went into the painting of that particular picture that produced my reaction to it. It may be harmonious color, rich handling of pigment, sound drawing, interesting handling of space relationships, an excellent treatment of rhythmic forms, sparkling color pattern, or an evocative and personal handling of subject matter. Any or several of these attributes of a fine painting may have caused me to single out this picture from its neighbors. Closer study may uncover certain deficiencies. The attraction may be tempered. Some disappointment may follow. Or, on the other hand, closer inspection may reveal subtleties not immediately discernible. Interest and satisfaction are heightened.

It is this pleasurable sensation that helps make the study of fine art worth while.

CHAPTER III  Despite all efforts to eradicate it, there still exists in the minds of laymen a feeling that art galleries devoted to the sale of pictures are mysterious places where visitors tiptoe past haughty striped-trouserred attendants, where gilt-framed pictures look down forbiddingly on the visitor who has the temerity to visit without purchasing. Not more than a year or two ago the *Saturday Evening Post* ran a story in which that impression was stressed.

The person who wrote the story couldn't have visited the New York galleries in recent years. There are many galleries in New York which have been showing the work of contemporary American artists for many years. Visitors are freely invited. A few of the old master galleries may still seem forbidding, but even they frequently show the work of contemporary American artists. Velvet drapes and striped trousers have long disappeared in the contemporary American galleries that abound in New York. It seems unwarranted to mislead a vast audience of readers who, I believe, would welcome correct information on the subject, in order to

prove a point in favor of a particular organization. It should be the purpose of every writer on art to direct this vast potential audience for art toward—not away from—those galleries showing the creative work by our fine painters. In another recent article I noticed that all progress in the distribution of art was attributed to one source rather than to the many organizations who over the years have prepared the way and still continue the struggle for the wider distribution of the work of American painters.

The technical details of the workings of a gallery are generally unfamiliar. The one-man show is a feature that is of especial interest to people who wander into a gallery. Big-business executives of organizations whose complexities baffle accountants question me about the procedure entailed in putting on a one-man show. Parents with offspring who paint a little, people with friends who paint too much, all want to know about a one-man show. Possibly the best way is to take the reader to the opening of a one-man show at a New York gallery and let him see for himself.

It is three o'clock. The afternoon noises of New York's Fifty-seventh Street section mingle with those of Madison Avenue and filter through the draped windows. There is a subdued air of excitement. The colorful paintings separated by wide expanses of the gray monk's-cloth-draped walls give the large gallery in which they are hung an air of well-being. The few visitors wandering through the gallery stand aside as the worried-looking proprietor rushes by giving last-minute instructions to his staff. Seating himself at his desk in the office adjoining the exhibition gallery, he dictates rapidly to his secretary several urgent letters which must be gotten out before the coming rush of visitors draws his attention elsewhere.

The elevator stops, empties, and a preoccupied young man emerges. He walks slowly about the exhibition room, hastening his pace as he passes several people grouped about a large dramatic figure piece at the far end of the room. He enters the office quietly, as though fearful of making a disturbing sound. The proprietor

looks up with a frown, but recognizing his visitor smiles affectionately.

"Well?"

"It looks fine. Good hanging job. Guess my paintings didn't give you much trouble."

The proprietor, remembering the hours spent traveling back and forth across the room, hanging and rehanging, trying one combination and then another, finishing one day, then returning the next day to rearrange the whole exhibition, grunts angrily:

"I should say they did give me trouble! Had a devil of a time, but I'm glad you like it."

"Do I have to stay around?" hesitantly ventures the young artist. "Would it be all right if I came back later?"

"Be here about four-thirty, but don't get lost," he is counseled.

At this moment the elevator door opens again, ushering in a determined-looking individual in his late forties. With a terrified glance at the newcomer, the artist rushes out the side door and down the stairs, hat and coat in hand.

The proprietor greets the newcomer and hands him a catalogue of the exhibition. "Good show," he exclaims with pride as he leans back watching his visitor with the feeling of a gold miner waiting to have his recently discovered find assayed. The representative of one of the widely read Metropolitan newspapers slowly makes a tour of the gallery. Alternately sitting down and getting up to examine a picture more closely, after some fumbling he finds a pencil and sinks into a chair in the center of the room to make his notes. Hovering anxiously in the background is the proprietor, answering an occasional question about a picture or offering a comment about a painting or about the artist. He carefully refrains from disturbing the critic's train of thought, or from any appearance of attempting to influence the reviewer in behalf of the exhibition.

At length the critic has completed his task. He glances through a group of photographs of the paintings offered him and selects one for possible reproduction to illustrate his forthcoming review of this show. A few choice bits of gossip about happenings in the art world are exchanged and the critic prepares to make his departure.

"A good show," he comments as he waits for the elevator. "I've been watching his pictures in group shows and they hold up well in a one-man show. He's a strong addition to your group and should go places."

The beaming proprietor stands looking at the closing door. He hopes that some of the onlookers have overheard the critic's remarks. Then abruptly he rushes back to his office, asking himself as he turns back to his dictation if those encouraging words will appear as emphatically in the printed review.

A portable bar laden with refreshments appears, and is guided to a corner of the gallery by a colored attendant whose starched white jacket stands out in this world of color. A surprised visitor gazing curiously at these activities shyly accepts a proffered glass.

An elderly newcomer bustles in and barks at the proprietor, "Came in to see the show before the crowds get here and hide the pictures." He takes the catalogue handed him, sits down quickly, and then turns to a serious study of the paintings. The proprietor rushes over to the bar hurriedly, samples a drink, then quickly gulps it down as the elevator begins to disgorge passengers. The door from the stairs opens slowly at the same time and the artist enters hesitatingly. He is immediately taken in tow by the proprietor and introduced to the visitors. The elderly gentleman beckons to the proprietor from his corner of the room. There is a whispered consultation. The artist is brought over. His creased brow relaxes and a smile of pleasure lights up his face. A newly arrived friend pulls him away to meet other arrivals. His place



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is taken by the proprietor's charming wife, who has been supervising activities in another part of the gallery. She greets the elderly gentleman now with a hearty handshake and a warming smile and they continue a discussion that seems to be centered on the picture before them.

The proprietor walks busily about the now filled room nodding here and shaking hands there but ending up by some subtle and difficult footwork back beside his wife and the elderly gentleman. The latter picks up his coat, shakes hands with the proprietor and his wife, and waves a farewell to the artist who can barely be seen above the heads of the admirers who now surround him.

The proprietor watches the elevator close and slowly removes a small box from his pocket. Gingerly he picks out a red label in the form of a star, wets the reverse side with his lips, and deftly attaches it to the frame of the picture before which the elderly gentleman had lingered.

Turning away abruptly as he notes a dozen pairs of eyes curiously following his movements, he mutters to his wife through the corner of his mouth, "Took me exactly twelve months to land that sale. He's been buying that painting ever since I took on the artist."

Taking a drink from a proffered tray, he smiles pleasantly at an attractive blonde, whose nose almost touches a canvas in her desire to study the secrets of the artist's manipulation of pigment. His eyes rove the room. Artists present for various reasons; friends here to wish the exhibitor well and give him the proper send-off; some, like the blond "nose-pusher," as gallery attendants term them, to gauge the competition; others to be seen and to meet possible prospects. A few top artists, generously here to lend a helping hand to a talented newcomer.

These, the proprietor dismisses from his thoughts. There are many who require attention. There is the museum director who purchases only old masters but looks at his contemporaries as a mat-

ter of duty. Here, the director who wishes eagerly to acquire American paintings for his museum, but has never yet been able to convince his stodgy trustees that they should provide the necessary funds. The discerning curator of the contemporary American museum is, of course, present, busily seeking pictures for possible inclusion in future exhibitions. This may lead to eventual purchase.

After these gentlemen are greeted and the pictures discussed with them, the proprietor makes his way through the milling mob to greet the genial friend and patron of the artist. She is a discerning collector who had acquired several of the artist's paintings when the artist had first been invited to join the gallery group. She it is who is responsible for the appearance of a number of the visitors. They include, among others, the wealthy businessman, who rarely visits galleries, in attendance out of obligation to his friend; the chic young decorator, client in tow, looking for a painting to go with the new rug but finding nothing with just the right shade of blue; and the scowling dowager who lumbers through the gallery, occasionally putting on a forced smile as she notices an acquaintance. Internally she breathes fire at these young whippersnappers who insist on desecrating canvas and straying from the footsteps of the nice old gentlemen of her circle whose paintings are so much more pleasant.

The hubbub increases as friend meets friend. The pictures furnish only a half-hidden background as conversation drifts to Lucy's party last night at neighboring Café Society, to Mary's revealing dress at El Morocco, to a brilliant première at the theater. A wealthy refugee who sat out the war in the comfort of the Savoy-Plaza glances at the pictures to see which French artist might have furnished the inspiration. A mink-garbed Park Avenue matron looks in surprise at a meek little woman laboriously taking notes on the pictures—just as the little woman has been doing at gallery openings year after year.

She and others can be observed making serious efforts to view the pictures, despite obstructions. The excited young couple who

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have been making the rounds all season gaze ecstatically at a richly painted little head of a young girl. Perhaps the budget may permit this addition to the small but growing collection?

"Pay for it in installments," suggests the proprietor.

"May we?" they ask excitedly.

"Certainly," replies the proprietor as he reaches again for a little red label and thinks with satisfaction of the number of young people whom he has started collecting in this painless manner. Other studious young men and women sip their drinks meditatively as they judge the work of the newcomer. They weigh one painting in comparison with another, and with the work of other painters whom they admire. A bustling art writer, wondering if there is a feature story here for his magazine, looks meditatively at the biographical information in the catalogue, then at the artist. An art director for an important advertising agency pigeonholes in his ever-active mind impressions of the paintings for possible future use in a forthcoming institutional campaign—if he can only convince the client. A handsome white-haired gentleman, conversing pleasantly with the wife of the proprietor, slowly makes the rounds of the gallery. People move aside quickly, nodding knowingly to each other as they recall his highly publicized collection from which museums so frequently borrow.

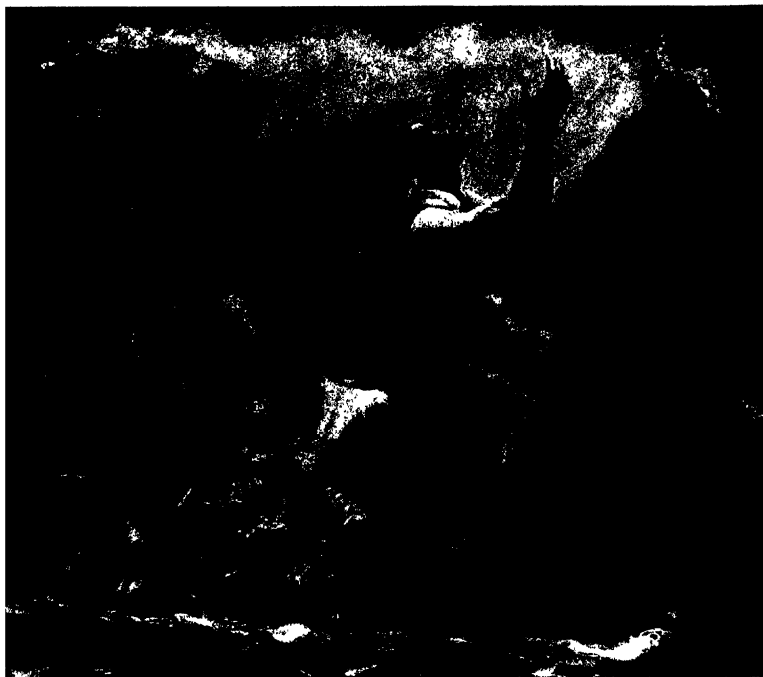
"I'll be back tomorrow," he whispers to the proprietor's wife as he reassuringly pats her cheek, "when I can look at these pictures quietly."

He echoes the thoughts of other seriously interested visitors. Many will be back time and again, alone, or with similarly enthusiastic friends.

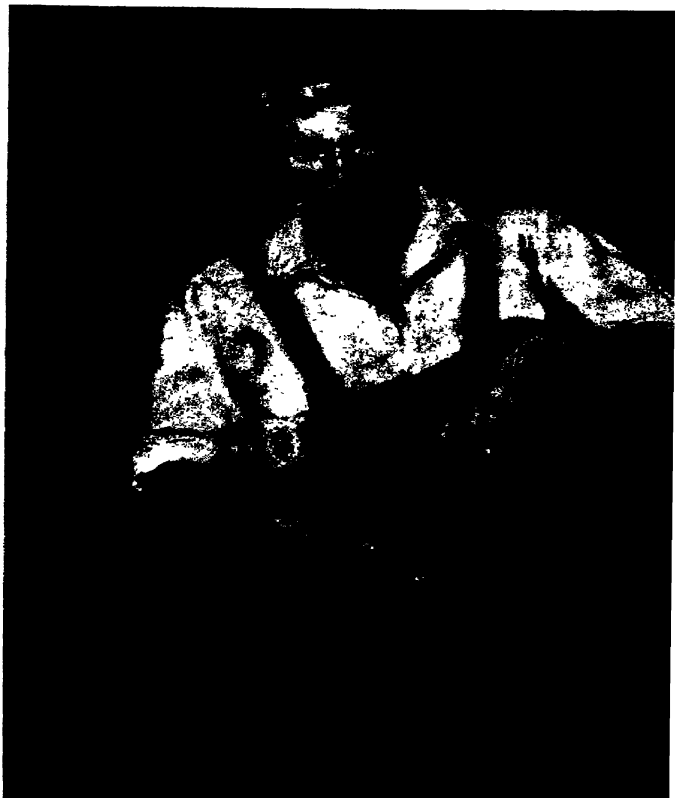
Guests leave. Others arrive late. An internationally acclaimed Hollywood beauty, magnificently attired, makes a splendid entrance amid much turning of heads and whispers. She surprises everyone but the proprietor with her serious attention to the paintings. Together they examine the canvases just as they have done



*American Landscape.*



ppp, by John Steuart Curry

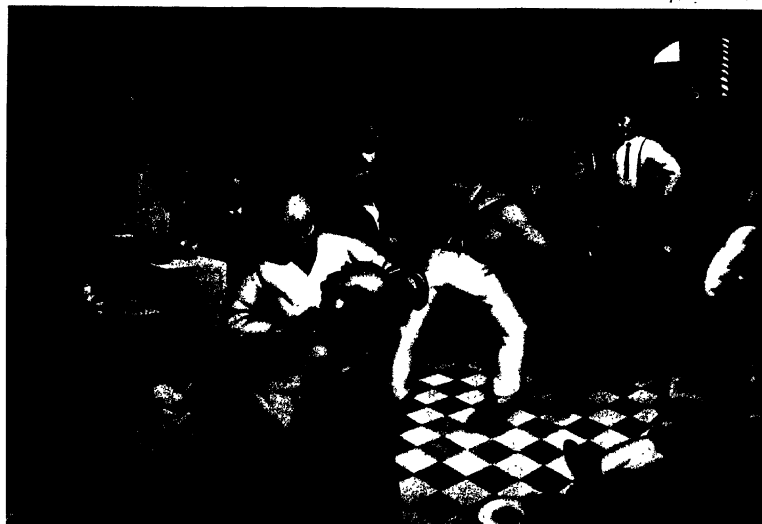


*Down to Earth.*



*Room*, by Louis Bouche

*Barber Shop*, by Paul Sam





*Landscape with Polo Pla*





by Waldo Peck



*String Quartet.*



*saps*, by Hobson Pittman

every time studio schedules have permitted her to visit New York. The noise increases as the square of the cocktails consumed. Then, imperceptibly, it lessens. The crowd begins to thin. Dinner appointments are made. The artist's friends, a few habitual toppers, and the proprietor's personal friends remain. It is seven o'clock.

"Do you think it is all right for me to leave now?" the artist questions, flushed with the excitement of the day's activities.

"Certainly," replies the proprietor. "Don't worry about the reviews. You have a good show, and if the critics don't realize it now, they will have to eventually."

"Thanks. Thank you for everything," murmurs the artist gratefully as he gathers his group together and heads for the dinner planned in his honor.

It is eight o'clock. The paintings, like impassive Buddhas, untouched by all the surge and ebb of the commotion before them, seem to gaze sympathetically down at the proprietor as he wearily turns the key in the door of the smoke-filled gallery and follows his equally fatigued wife down the stairs to the street.

A gallery premiere is over. A new artist is launched. The New York art world, or rather a portion of it, has come to view the first showing of an artist who aspires to serious consideration. For a period of usually three weeks his paintings will be on free view to the general public, daily from about ten to six. The representatives of the New York press and the various art periodicals have visited the gallery during the quieter hours which preceded the formal opening. They will give their estimate of the artist's talents and accomplishment in the forthcoming columns of their respective papers or magazines. Many or few will come, depending upon the tone of their reports. Some are attracted despite unfavorable reviews, either through other publicity channels or by reason of the prestige built up over the years by the gallery. The one-man show is definitely a springboard to success or at least recognition in the art world.

Success, however, is not necessarily judged in financial terms. An exhibition may be a success from the point of view of the enthusiastic and laudatory reception accorded the artist, but it may be a dismal failure financially. Many artists have won the unanimous plaudits of the press and the respect of their fellow artists only to wait years before they were able to cash in, even moderately, on well-established reputations. Many well-known examples went to paupers' graves without ever having tasted the fruits of worldly success. It is a sad reflection on our country that the majority of our most highly respected painters must supplement their limited incomes from the sale of paintings by teaching, commercial work, or other activities in order to keep themselves and their families alive. It is to be hoped that the improvement of the past few years continues. However, the time seems still distant when our great contemporary artists will receive financial remuneration comparable to that received by headliners in the fields of music, the theater, literature, and the films.

Many of today's artists have been launched through one-man shows such as has been described. The more prolific painter follows up his debut with exhibitions, usually at intervals of two or three years—sometimes even annually. Other artists, working slowly and deliberately, may hold a one-man show not more than once in five to ten years. Of course, between exhibitions, single examples are shown in group exhibitions at the gallery of the dealer with whom the artist is associated and at the large invited national and international exhibitions.

It is a long, steep, and often circuitous climb for the average artist before his long-awaited debut in an established New York gallery. From that early day when little Johnny's teacher tells his parents that she thinks the lad has talent, until that memorable day when he sees his pictures grouped on a gallery wall, there are many years of struggle to be endured by the embryo artist. Many, unfortunately for themselves and the profession, do weather their trials

and tribulations through perseverance, rather than by reason of their talent. Many of these ultimately are discouraged and channeled into other vocations. Thwarted, they bitterly resent the lack of taste and perspicacity of critics, dealers, and collectors. Others plug along, manage to find patrons, or purchasers with little judgment, or obtain jobs which support them while they paint mediocrities to be exhibited in some galleries which have little if any standards. Thus they continue through life obstructing the paths of serious creative talents.

It is difficult to ascertain talent at an early age. Exhibitions of children's art charm and amaze those who have worked for years seeking an original expression in their art. Most frequently the naïve appeal and freshness are lost upon further study of the tools of the painting profession. The talented youngster, properly encouraged, ambitious and industrious, admirably guided by intelligent instructors has the right start.

The history of painting, however, is replete with stories of artists who, because of parental objection, necessity, or other similar reasons, were sidetracked into careers which disregarded their obvious inclinations and talents. Only after experiencing unhappiness in other professions did the more stubborn of them finally find their way to the arts. Some discovered their talent late and gave up their accustomed way of life to become painters. Gauguin is the well-known example of a painter who made a success as a businessman before turning to painting, to the advantage of art, but to the misfortune of his family.

Today, the opportunities for studying art have improved considerably. Art instruction in the public school, exhibitions of children's work, various scholarship awards to promising students for study at the better art schools, and the excellent college art departments smooth the path of the young artist. Of course the chaff is helped along with the wheat, making it more difficult for the talented few to fight their way through the crowd. Too many of the schools en-

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courage students with a slight imitative ability to make a career of painting when it would be better for all concerned if they became successful businessmen, good carpenters, or truck drivers, with the ability to understand what their better-endowed colleagues are striving for in the field of art. The unending stream of inferior works offered me for exhibition, and which I good-naturedly examine, are to some extent the result of misguided teaching. One of my artists, William Palmer, who has taught painting for many years, tells his classes quite frankly that he doesn't expect most of his students to amount to anything as painters. If he can only help them to a real understanding and appreciation of good pictures, he and they will have accomplished something.

The schools, from the elementary grades up, afford an unparalleled opportunity for the creation of a new and sizable audience for the American artist. This is malleable material which promises much. Unfortunately the quality of instruction has not been of a consistently high standard. It has been suggested that the appointment of professional artists to teaching positions in city school systems might help inspire students to greater attention, and instill in them more respect for practitioners in the field of art. Sticklers for scholastic protocol have cited as objection the artist's frequent lack of the required educational background. In my experience I have usually found the artist a highly cultured individual, self-educated often as a result of concentration from early age on his art studies, but entertaining and provocative. He would be an asset to any school system.

Lecture demonstrations in the schools by practicing artists might be another valuable means of imprinting a lasting impression on the minds of young students. Courses would be much more exciting as the result of familiarity with their working methods. And incidentally a new and welcome source of income would be available to the artist.

more stimulating by adding to their own information concerning activities in the art field. In the galleries I have come in contact with many who do attempt to secure for themselves and impart to their students a vital aesthetic awareness. It has been exciting to watch the long lines of these youngsters pour into the galleries even though business functions are temporarily disrupted.

On the other hand I know of talented artists driven out of the school system because of scholastic drudgery and wearying red tape. I have heard of classes so dull that they have bred a lasting dislike for anything having to do with art. The schools throughout the country should seek the artist's co-operation as enthusiastically as they have welcomed author, musician, actor, and others to lectures and concerts.

Recently the chairman of the art department of the James Monroe High School in New York, Mr. Wilkes, told me of an interesting experiment. In the early 1930s he had secured an appropriation for the purchase of original prints and reproductions to be hung in the halls of this tremendous school. Original etchings and lithographs by advanced American and French print makers, as well as reproductions of more familiar work, were acquired. Daily examination of these pictures between classes must certainly have improved the students' taste. And the Board of Education would probably be pleased to know that the total financial value of the collection has increased considerably in the past few years. Today some of the prints owned by the school are rare and valuable collectors' items.

This is an example of what could be done on a very limited budget. Prints by the best American artists are very inexpensive, while good low-priced reproductions of American art are being published. Students can often make their own frames, thereby acquiring a personal relationship with the pictures and a pride of possession to be remembered in later life.

Most of the established artists today did not have current advantages. It took considerable struggle, both physical and mental, to



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achieve their present status. In my own group of artists the steps by which they reached the portals of the Midtown Galleries varied. Julien Binford was on his way to a medical career. His parents worried about his progress, or lack of it, took some of his drawings which seemed to occupy so much of his time to a local museum director for an expert opinion. His father was immediately advised to withdraw him from medical school and to send his son to the local art school. This the wise father did, and some time later Binford was sent off to the Art Institute of Chicago for further instruction. After several years' study at Chicago, working part time to pay his tuition, he won a lucrative fellowship which enabled him to continue his studies for four years in Paris. Returning to this country, he went back to his native Virginia, dividing his time between farming and painting—a rather difficult combination. His work was brought to my attention. During a visit to Richmond, where I was invited to serve on the jury of a Virginia State Exhibition, I had an opportunity to visit him and invite him to join my group. In the past few years he has attained considerable recognition. Many museums and collectors have bought his paintings and he has won an important place for himself.

Doris Rosenthal, on the other hand, intended to become an artist as far back as she can remember. As a child in California, she won local competitions. Through the public schools and college she never lost sight of her goal. Teaching, designing, and then more teaching, enabled her to eat—and to paint. Finally there came a painting trip to Europe on her savings, then two Guggenheim Fellowships which turned her attention to Mexico. More teaching, steadily increasing recognition, and many important sales at last gave her the opportunity to devote all her time to painting.

Others have started off as commercial artists before turning to the fine arts. Still others began life in foreign countries, came here to learn a new language, work their way through art school, and make the precipitous climb to the forefront of American painting.

American painters, they have become unhyphenated in the truest sense.

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The artist has the same problems as any other citizen seeking to carve out a career for himself. He is, by the nature of his gift, more sensitive, more acutely aware of his emotional reactions to surrounding stimuli. He is nevertheless a hard-working member of his community, and rarely the legendary dilettante so often pictured. The recent tendency to decentralize art in this country and the nationwide Government Art Project have brought the artist closer to the community in which he lives or works. By painting murals in small-town post offices, many an artist has really become familiar with the townspeople, and they in turn have found the artist, strangely enough in spite of all they had heard and read, a fairly normal and likable human.

In the outlying sections of the country—New York is still the mecca—the young artist aims first for local recognition and success. He exhibits in locally arranged shows and then endeavors to gain entry into the state-wide exhibits. Some early rebuffs turn to success. State awards and widening appreciation embolden the artist to send his paintings to the large national jury shows. Competing with thousands from every section of the country, he may find the going difficult, or he may be tapped for invitation by the jury of artists. During the war years, many large exhibitions which had previously included both invited and juried pictures dropped the jury selections because of shipping restrictions. The artists who were not represented by New York dealers had a difficult time breaking into the big shows. However, some of the farsighted museum directors kept in touch with various parts of the country by requesting museum men and art writers from those sections to suggest local artists for invitation to their shows.

The next step for the artist who feels that he needs to widen the sphere of his activities is the storming of the Fifty-seventh Street bastions. Incidentally, he has also discovered that an artist often

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needs a New York reputation in order to convince the neighbors back home of his worth. The artist makes the trip to New York with a group of paintings to show the various gallery directors. Magazines and newspaper reviews have usually given him an idea of the galleries which might be most receptive to his particular type of painting. If the distance is great and an immediate visit not possible, photographs are sent with the suggestion that paintings could be shipped for inspection. The determined individual often burns his bridges behind him and moves to New York. There he can take advantage of the great museum collections where the riches of the past and present are available for inspiration. There the work of his outstanding contemporaries are on view in gallery exhibitions. There other artists provide stimulating conversation and possible aid for that toe hold he wishes to get in the exhibiting field.

In previous years, many artists felt that they must live permanently in New York. Lately there has been a noticeable dispersal. Wider local appreciation with greater exhibiting and sales opportunities in their own communities have convinced many artists of the wisdom of staying at home or returning there to take advantage of the tendency of many museums to play up the native son. Then, too, leading universities in different sections of the country offer positions as artists-in-residence, or well-paid instructorships in fine arts departments. With their business details in the hands of a dealer who exhibits, publicizes, and sells their work, there is no great reason except strong personal preference for the artists to remain permanently in New York. Living outside of the metropolis is often more pleasant and less expensive, with the result that many formerly confirmed New Yorkers are now to be found scattered throughout the land.

All that is far in the future for the young man just off the train and concentrating on his conquest of Fifty-seventh Street. He arrives with paintings and clippings from home-town newspapers and the art magazines which cover sectional and national shows.



*The Chess Game*, by Heilbrunn

*Restaurant*, by Guy Pène du Bois





*With Calico Roses*, by Georgia O'Keeffe





*Spring*, by

*ling the Hungry*, by Anton Refregier





*Ancient Rocks*, by Russell Cowles



*Still Life—Oranges*, by Henry Lee Mc'ee





*Sunday Afternoon*, by Z

*Terrace Central Park*, by Gifford Beal



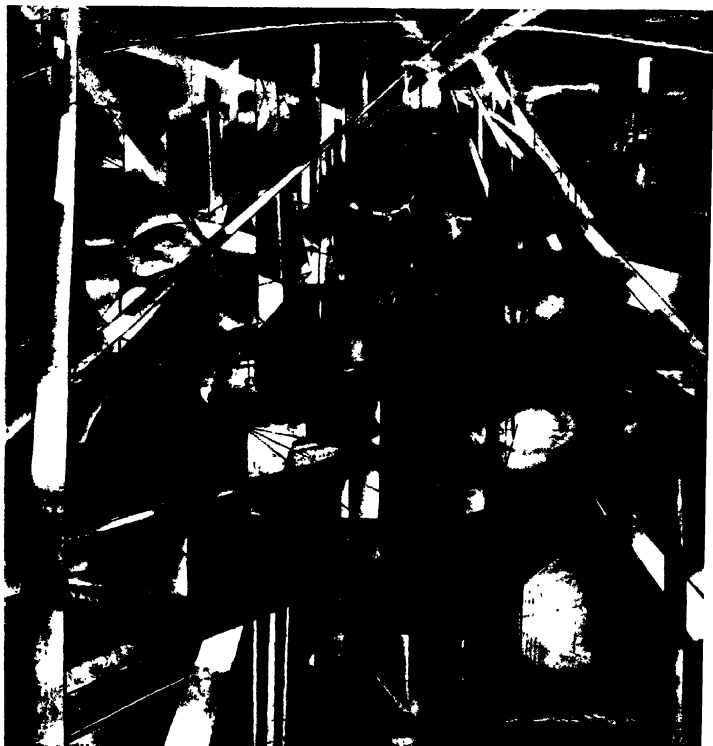




by Millard Sheets

*Still Life*, by Morris Kant





*Brooklyn Bridge*



*Reaching Night*, by Miron Sokole



*Israel*, by Samuel Rosenberg

Most of the gallery directors are willing to look at pictures by appointment more as a courtesy than with any great hope that they will find an exceptional talent unknown to them. The occasional surprise find makes the effort worth while. Most dealers keep an eye on the sectional and national big shows and are well aware of promising artists who make their mark there. However, unfortunately for even the highly talented, most galleries over the years have built up definite groups of artists to whom first responsibility is due. When the gallery's saturation point is reached in space, time, and energy, even the artist with definite potentialities must still be turned away, or at best put on a waiting list. Some galleries who work differently, experiment with new artists and, with an eye on immediate sales, retain only those whom their public accepts. With dozens of artists applying weekly at the doors of New York's contemporary American galleries, the newcomer rarely finds immediate acceptance despite his state medals and treasured clippings. Opening wedges for the young artist are furnished by occasional invited group exhibitions at certain galleries and exhibitions of various artists' organizations devoted to the task of showing newcomers. Gradually he finds a place for himself, begins to attract more and more attention, is invited to join a group, and then comes his one-man show.

CHAPTER IV ♣ In 1945 word came of the arrival in this country of a ship packed with large cases containing some of the world's great masterpieces—two hundred and two paintings conservatively valued at \$80,000,000. These pictures, mostly from Berlin's Kaiser-Friedrich-Museum, were sent for safe keeping to the National Gallery in Washington, D.C. Fabulous paintings, Vermeer's "Young Woman with a Pearl Necklace," Jan van Eyck's "Man with a Pink," a famous Dürer, a number of Rembrandts, Botticellis, Raphaels, and a Correggio were among the pictures that

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excited the interest of every art lover conversant with the great art of the past. These paintings had been stored in salt mines by the Germans to be found by advancing American troops. Newspapers headlined this great discovery at the time.

Throughout the war there appeared stories of the growing Hermann Goering art collection swollen with loot from museum and private collections in Austria, Holland, Belgium, and France. The beribboned Reichsmarshal despoiled the Nazis' victims of their art treasures as completely as Hitler's armies plundered their crops. Works of art disappeared from museums and private collections to be observed later hanging in the homes of ranking Nazis or on walls of German museums. One read of masterpieces being presented to Goering by cringing collaborationists. Forewarned museum officials, especially in France, often had an opportunity to move many of the nation's treasures to out-of-the-way hiding places. There they were carefully protected and guarded. Private collections did not fare so well. The Germans, known for their scholarly art historians, were quite familiar with the great collections of Europe and took over without the slightest compunction. Quantities of art objects poured into Germany in the wake of advancing troops. Many were forced into fraudulent auctions and were purchased at a fraction of their value or with stolen funds. The Nazi leaders vied with each other in sending agents to outmaneuver competitors. Even German towns paid tribute with presents of cherished art objects to visiting notables.

Goering, the man of the world, used art in an attempt to impress his nation and others with his good taste and connoisseurship. Till the very last he has always endeavored to appear of a superior mold than his partners in crime. When the 101st Airborne Infantry advanced on the Berchtesgaden region, they found his collection in the process of being secreted in a salt mine in the vicinity of his home which neighbored Hitler's summer place. A huge quantity of sculptures and paintings was discovered. American soldiers had an

opportunity to see them exhibited, and we at home have had glimpses of these masterpieces through photographs and newsreels. Another collection of almost 6,000 art treasures plundered from Paris collections by Herr Rosenberg's underlings was discovered by our troops hidden in a Bavarian castle.

Hitler, an erstwhile artist himself, was not to be outdone in rapacity. An example was the formation of a collection in the Austrian town of Lenz where Hitler had studied. According to the Netherlands Information Bureau, he secured 1,200 paintings from Dutch sources. Rembrandts, Van Dycks, Rubens, and Vermeers were among the acquisitions. With the mention of Vermeer, we are reminded of the copyist who palmed off fake Vermeers on Goering and also on unsuspecting museums.

Our generals, too, found opportunity in the midst of a fiercely raging conflict to think of art. Directives were issued by our general headquarters establishing an organization for the protection of the cultural monuments of Europe. Trained museum men and other art authorities traveled with the armies to secure and protect the treasures in the paths of the advancing armies. These men, part of the Monuments, Fine Arts, and Archives setup, did extraordinary work for which all civilized people should be grateful. Our bombers, when possible, were given instructions to avoid the destruction of historical monuments and buildings known to contain works of art. Fire was withheld by our armies, cities bypassed to save works of art. And after our armies had accomplished their objectives, the problem of reducing damage by our own men was a considerable one. Precautions were taken. Stories were written concerning the aesthetic importance of the cities occupied and given to the men to induce proper respect. The work of repairing the art objects, and now of returning them, continues.

When unscrupulous men with the blood of millions on their hands eagerly collect works of art, when great armies respect the heritage bequeathed us by famous masters of the past, we are truly

impressed. But this respect for the treasures of the past is not without its irony. We think of Rembrandt's home auctioned off during his lifetime, of Hals pawning his belongings and dying in abject poverty, of countless others suffering misery during their lifetime for their art which is now avidly sought and so carefully preserved in the midst of cupidity, destruction, and death. How they might have relished this commotion over the products of their studios.

We think, too, of our artists today often similarly neglected by their contemporaries. How difficult it has been to get our leaders in war, in finance, in politics, seriously to consider our living artists. Our congressmen voted billions for war, but when a few thousands were needed to defray the expenses of a group of artist correspondents who had already been sent to the battlefields to depict war activities, this paltry appropriation was voted down. Washington officialdom takes pride in its National Gallery even to the extent of financing its upkeep. They revel in its brilliant openings and wander through its corridors admiring the treasures of the past. No one values the great paintings hanging there more than does the writer. This interest in the best of the older art engendered by my early studies at Harvard's Fogg Museum has never flagged. I have found much pleasure in my visits to the National Gallery and plan many future trips. But I have wished that the tiring flight of steps could be dispensed with. The tremendous columns oppress me. Surely some of the millions lavished on the building could have been used to perpetuate the living art of America. The erection in our capital of a modern edifice devoted to the acquisition and exhibition of our contemporary art would be symptomatic of a nation's pride in its present and belief in its future. There have been efforts made in this direction, but our nation's lawmakers, who are usually so jealous of their nation's greatness in other matters, are nonetheless content to bask entirely in the glories of other nations' pasts.

The paintings of the Mellon Collection emphasize, as has the war, the tangible value placed on great art. During its lean years of

feverish reconstruction, the Soviet Government, through the sale to Andrew Mellon of some of the magnificent paintings in the Hermitage Collection, replenished its treasury. Certainly this industrial titan and treasurer of the United States was the direct antithesis of everything the U.S.S.R. represented. Yet Mellon's money and the brushes of Rembrandt and Raphael helped finance a five-year plan. Raphael's "Alba Madonna" is reputed to have been purchased by Mellon for \$1,500,000. Our Metropolitan Museum was another contributor to Russian coffers.

Mellon and his contemporaries and predecessors competed in an entertaining and historic struggle for the great art of the past. They stripped European collections, to the current enrichment of American museums. But for many of them personal vanity and public acclaim, rather than their own individual taste and connoisseurship, were the dominating forces behind the formation of these great collections. The public today can be grateful that most of these acquisitions are now on public view, helped in this direction sometimes by the country's tax structure. When one considers, however, that the price of one of these masterpieces could fill a museum with a distinguished and comprehensive collection of contemporary art, it is difficult to understand the disregard of their contemporaries by the majority of these wealthy collectors.

One of the most flagrant examples of this mental attitude toward living artists was the will of William Rockhill Nelson, wealthy Kansas City publisher. Nelson left a fortune of millions for a museum to be presented to Kansas City. In a short time the city had a great museum filled with a magnificent collection, the result of a discerning and unstinted quest, here, in Europe, and in the Orient. But not a thing by a living artist. Nelson had stipulated in his will that no work by an artist not dead thirty years could be acquired for the Nelson Gallery. This was the hard-boiled businessman's attempt to play safe, to insure the importance of his collection. But his reasoning was not too sound. It is true that in thirty years some



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of the acquisitions of contemporary artists would decrease in value. But others would increase to such an extent that they could easily finance the cost of those pictures eventually to be consigned to the basement. This does not include the human equation, which probably never occurred to Mr. Nelson—the opportunity to aid in the advancement of American art through the encouragement of the artist by the purchase of his paintings.

Ironically the beneficiaries of Mr. Nelson's generosity thought otherwise concerning the advisability of acquiring living art. They couldn't break his will but they did the next best thing. A Friends of Art organization was formed consisting of several hundred Kansas citizens interested in the museum and in American art. Each year this organization brings to Kansas City a number of pictures by leading American painters which the changing directorate would like to see hanging on the museum walls. These paintings are exhibited for about a week. Then the members vote. Two or three pictures which receive the most votes are purchased from funds provided by annual membership dues. These acquisitions are then presented to the Nelson Gallery. The collection, frequently augmented by additional private benefaction, is growing nicely and is a subject of continued interest and pride to the many Friends of Art members.


Many of these public collections of older art which we have been discussing were gotten together with rare taste and scholarship. There are occasional slips of judgment concerning authenticity, attributions, and restoration, sometimes the result of a donor's stipulation that the less desirable pictures must be hung. But in the main these great museums are national institutions which we may use to advantage and in which we may take pride. The precedent they establish for smaller, less richly endowed institutions is, however, often detrimental. The director of a large museum once told me that he was frequently visited by heads of neighboring art associations. An endowment for purchase had just been received by the

small museum. My friend was being asked for suggestions as to the best use for the money.

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"You haven't enough money to buy an important old master," he would tell them. "For that sum you will find only a second-rate example of a minor painter. Take the money and buy several top-flight examples by our best American painters. Then you will have a group of important pictures of which your community can be proud." His auditor would listen, heartily agree to the wisdom of the advice, and be off. Several months later local newspapers would inform him that the art association in question had just purchased a painting by an old master. It was the usual second-rate example of a minor master or, even worse, an inferior painting of dubious authorship. Over and over his advice was requested and then similarly disregarded. It is gratifying, therefore, to see the recent increase in the number of museums collecting American painting. Certain art groups with limited funds have concentrated on inexpensive water colors and drawings. In little time, at little expense, they have acquired outstanding collections in the medium in which they have specialized. It is not my opinion that these organizations should become the sole source of income for the artist, but through their patronage they should encourage the production of fine art in this country and provide their museums with collections where future generations may find the great paintings of this era. A museum should be a living, vital force in a community, and only through an interest in the living, eager art of its own generation can it fulfill its complete purpose. This should not be an unwelcome responsibility for the museum director but a challenging opportunity to lead in the encouragement of a greater American art. Through his enthusiasm and good taste he can furnish an incentive for those thousands of Americans who, fumbling and sheepish, look for this type of leadership.

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CHAPTER V  To the average American the word "painting" immediately brings to mind the "portrait." We who are immersed in a world of art, reading, thinking about art, frequently lose our perspective concerning the millions of average Americans and forget that such is their conception. If we recall our colonial beginnings, it was the portrait painter who first appeared on the scene to depict the features of our flourishing colonists. It was long before the American painter turned his attention to landscape. Today, however, portrait painting is in considerable disrepute. Leading contemporary artists are reluctant to accept portrait commissions, often refuse entirely. The demands of sitters, the constant bickering with them and with members of their family, have made the task a thankless and boring one for many sensitive painters. The field has been left wide open for professional hacks who satisfy their sitters by securing a semblance of a photographic likeness. There are, of course, able and talented painters who do manage to satisfy their conscience and their sitters with a "speaking likeness." But these are outnumbered by the so-called society portrait painters who are more adept at making friends than they are at constructing a picture. Some have found it unnecessary to learn the simple rudiments of their craft. A photograph enlarged on the canvas simplifies matters.

The artist with excellent social graces, who knows the right people socially and politically, is continually kept busy executing portraits which are to be found hanging in prominent spots in the homes of wealthy Americans. On my various trips to different sections of the country I have seen many of these poorly painted "colored photographs," and heard of success stories that are a sad commentary on the taste of the sitters. Even in the homes of avid collectors are to be found portraits of the connoisseur, and of his wife, executed by the painter currently in vogue, rather than by one of



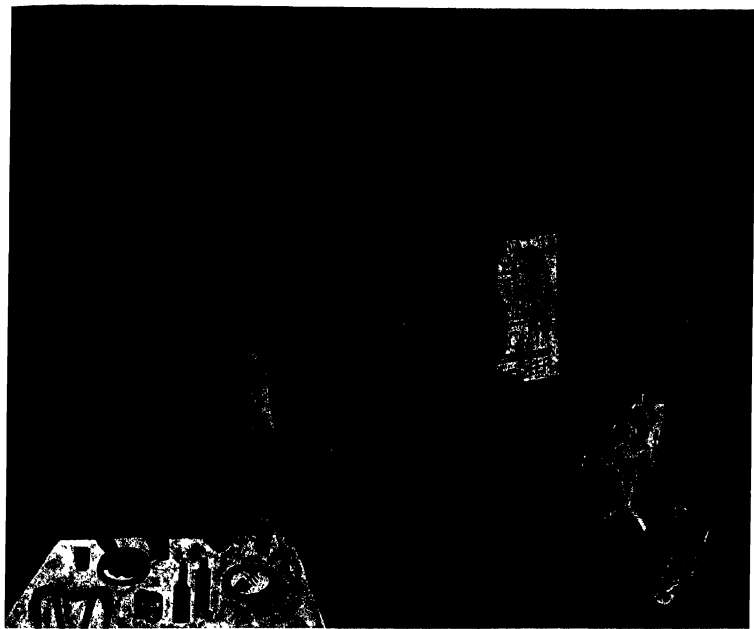
Tops



by Bruce Mitchell

*The Crap Shooter*, by Julien Binfond





Cafe Scene, by



*Greenwich*, by John Sloan



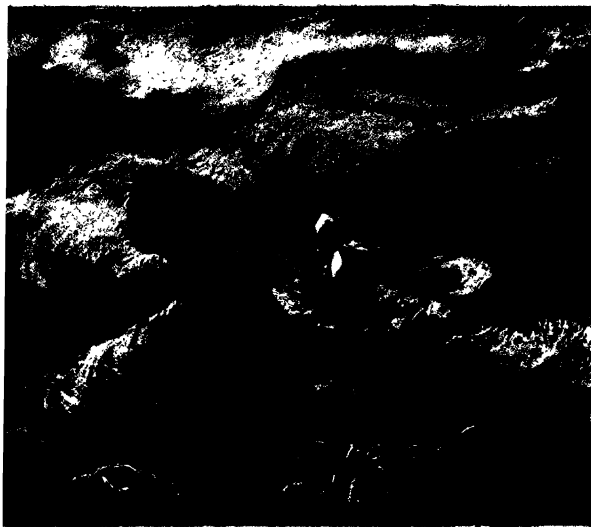
*McSorley's Bar*, by John Sloan





*Harlequin*





orn. by George Grosz





Ramy Nigl



ment. by Philip Guston

the fine artists represented in his collection. He has the same distrust of the serious painter. As a matter of fact, there are many fine artists today who could paint excellent portraits, secure a likeness and produce a picture to compare with the artist's finest production. A likeness is a rather elusive term. One rarely has a definite, clear-cut conception of one's own physiognomy. A group of friends or relatives will seldom agree on the exactitude of a likeness even in a photograph. We today are not certain that the great portraits by our predecessors resembled the sitters. In fact, we find that portraits of the same subject by different painters often vary considerably. We are convinced, however, that they are superb paintings, penetrating character studies which are redolent of the times in which both sitter and artist lived. A portrait by today's fine artist can similarly be a valuable aesthetic heritage for future generations long after the hack portrait has been turned to the wall.

If you like an artist's work and you feel that, judging from his past productions, he might produce a good figure painting with you or a member of your family as the subject, don't hesitate. Give the artist the task and don't try to influence him. Perhaps he hasn't painted a member of the English nobility nor spent a season at Palm Beach, cashing in on wealthy Americans' desire to be painted by the brush that limned his lordship. That reflected aura would soon be dissipated anyway. But he will probably be seriously interested in producing a fine work of art and achieving at the same time a sincere character study. In a recent exhibition by Franklin Watkins, one of our most accomplished American painters, a male portrait was considered an outstanding picture in the show. Later, this painting won an award at a national exhibition. The owner of such a portrait should prize it indeed. More sympathetic sitters would turn the attention of better American artists to this field and raise the quality of present-day portraiture in this country.


In the early days of American painting such artists as Smibert, Copley, Stuart, and later Eakins, Sargent, and Bellows, left imper-

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ishable records of their contemporaries. Yet our war leader, Franklin Roosevelt, one of the leading actors in the greatest drama of all time, passes away without leaving a single likeness of himself by an important American painter. Any organization with political connections can get a president of the United States to sit for the organization's pet painter. Never, it seems today, is that painter of the same stature in his profession as is the sitter. Yet William Dunlap, whose *The Arts of Design in the United States* is an invaluable record of our early American painting, records that George Washington told Gilbert Stuart, after giving him a lengthy sitting, that "he would sit to him again at any time he wished." What a subject Roosevelt would have made for some of our fine painters. We have to be content, however, with the pedestrian records available or, better still, turn to the excellent photographic studies of him. To add irony to this situation, the President was sitting for the usual type of uninspired sketch when he was stricken.

After twelve years another public figure steps down from office and the council of the city of New York considers measures to acquire a portrait of its former mayor, Fiorello LaGuardia. Commissions are also to be awarded for portraits of previous mayors. Again the painters who have watched with interest the bustling activities of the Little Flower, and who could do such a fine job of this particular subject, are ignored.

A restorer has discovered that a painting hanging in City Hall is by Rembrandt Peale. Thus, instead of being valued at \$3,000, it is now supposed to be worth \$25,000. It was a sound investment for the city in the early 1800s to acquire a Peale painting of the Chief Justice of the New York Supreme Court. Might it not be an equally profitable suggestion that the city of New York be as discriminating in its selection of painters to portray our present-day mayors?

CHAPTER VI  The discovery of this painting by Peale emphasizes the heritage of American painting too frequently forgotten. The young artist, overwhelmed by the heady French influences, thinks that American art started in 1913 with the Armory Show. The new collector, fed on the constant repetition of the names of the great European masters, and the scholarly antiquarian, absorbed in dates and periods, forget that an American art has evolved side by side with the emergence of the United States as a great nation. Roots transplanted here in the days of the early colonists have been nurtured by the same minds, fed by the same experiences, reinvigorated in the same melting pot of foreign influences to blossom as truly indigenous art.

Early conditions in this country were not sympathetic to the development of an artist. The settlers who came here were interested in other things: independence, opportunity, religious freedom, and the like. The struggle for these goals was a hard one. As conditions eased, victory over adversity instilled pride in themselves and in their families and opened the way for the portrait painter. The early painters in the colonies came here to try their luck in the new world. They brought with them many of the faults of the European schools they had left behind. The invigorating atmosphere of the new country furnished a healthy influence, and the best of these artists produced sincere, if unpolished, characterizations of the early Americans and their families. John Smibert was one of the best of these forerunners of American portraitists. John Singleton Copley, a contemporary of our great revolutionary leaders, applied the principles of his predecessors with such remarkable perspicacity that his searching portraits may be considered the first great paintings produced in America. Unfortunately for the artist and this country, Copley was attracted to England by the elegance and polish he found lacking here. He attained that elegance at the

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cost of his artistic strength during the very time his countrymen were battling for independence in the land he had forsaken. In England he found another expatriate, Benjamin West, a Pennsylvania Quaker who had earlier been to Rome.

On coming to England, West was an immediate success with his large Italian-inspired, imaginative, and historical canvases. He was one of the founders of the Royal Academy and later became its second president. West's contemporaries in England at the time were men such as Gainsborough, Romney, Raeburn, and Lawrence—men whose fashionable portraits have been so popular in this country. Here, at its very beginnings, the colonies had sent over a painter to become a leader in British painting. Much later there were to be such others as James Abbott McNeill Whistler, and John Singer Sargent. These men were expatriates who earned their reputations abroad. With the possible exception of Sargent, they can hardly be classed as American painters. They were, however, rallying points for the American artist who went abroad to study. This was especially true in the case of Benjamin West in whose studio worked many of the early American students who had come to England for instruction.

Gilbert Stuart was one of the ablest of these early Americans. He returned to paint some of our finest American portraits. His paintings of George Washington permanently fixed the American conception of the first president, even though others like Charles Willson Peale may have represented the man in a more natural, less idealized vein. The tremendous interest of the colonies in their representations of Washington and other leaders mounted almost to an apotheosis of the man. Copies and reproductions of these paintings were distributed through the colonies to appear in public buildings and homes as an intellectual reaction to the Revolution. American artists vied with poets, writers, dramatists, composers to express the new way of life, as they responded to the times in which they lived. Whether we respect the results of much of this work, it was

an outgrowth of an art spirit in this country. Artists progressed in technical competence. An occasional painter such as Stuart experimented with innovations in the use of light and shadows similar to those discovered many years later by the Impressionists. Still lifes by the Peales were featured in recent exhibitions at the Brooklyn Museum and the Carnegie Institute's Survey of American Painting.

Ralph Earl, recently given a comprehensive exhibition at the Whitney Museum, Thomas Sully, Robert Fulton, and Samuel F. B. Morse stand out in the stream of painters who portrayed their nation's energetic contemporaries. To the average American, these last-named painters always come as a surprise. Accomplished artists, they turned to invention—Fulton to the steamboat and Morse the telegraph. In their careers these two men may be said to exemplify the relation between the painter and the age in which they lived. With changing conditions subjects, too, began to change. Gentility gave place to determination in the physiognomy of the sitters, foreshadowing a coming industrial revolution.

The gradual lengthening of the horizons through the explorations, the westward advance, the Louisiana purchase, all began to turn the minds of men toward the grandeur of the continent's landscape. There had been occasional interest in landscape evidenced by John Trumbull with his painting of Niagara Falls. Washington Allston had painted romantic landscapes. Doughty, Asher B. Durand, Kensett, and Thomas Cole, through their interest in the locale of the Hudson River, directed the early attention of painters to the transcription of nature on canvas. It was Frederick Church and Albert Bierstadt, however, who turned man's attention westward with their enormous and popular landscapes of the Rockies and the Far West. These big paintings appropriately complemented the great fortunes and tremendous homes that resulted from the country's expansion. Church's interest in the Andes antedated another trend, southward toward Latin America, an interest that was later to beget us the reproachful term of the "Colossus of the



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North." Church's "The Heart of the Andes," a tremendous canvas, 66 $\frac{1}{8}$  by 119 $\frac{1}{2}$  inches, was shown here in 1859 and later in England with wide popular success.

It was a period of scientific and philosophic study of nature by such men as Humboldt, Darwin, Emerson, Agassiz, and Thoreau, who helped popularize what we today might now term a back-to-nature movement. If this intellectual interest in nature produced gigantic overdramatized landscapes, the tendency of Church and Bierstadt was a product of their age, and led to a similar occupation with the subject by greater painters who followed them.

Thomas Moran, who lived well into the twentieth century, painted the West with a Turner-esque feeling for sunlight. He attempted bold subjects with remarkable daring. There is an amazing record from his brush of the vastness of our country. The cloying picturesqueness of his paintings, however, seems to have deterred many of our contemporaries from using the same subject matter. On a visit to the Grand Canyon and other awe-inspiring wonders of nature in this country, there is the recurrent thought of the various contemporaries who might be able to capture the spirit of these places in the idiom of today. Names come to mind of artists who could cope with the immensity of the subject without becoming illustrational or losing their identity, but recollections of Thomas Moran impinge on the mental image to dispel the probability of attracting any contemporaries here. With the aforementioned decentralization of painters, it is conceivable that talented artists living in these sections of the West will someday digest this material and express their reactions in paintings of great power.

With George Inness, the artist's conception rather than the subject began to dominate the painting of landscapes. His finer poetic interpretations of nature win a place for this artist among our great painters. Working contemporaneously with the members of the Barbizon school in France, from whom he gained much, he produced some splendid landscapes which emphasized the fertility and

abundance achieved by the country as it rebounded from the fratricidal conflict of the preceding years. Alexander Wyant and Homer Martin, with Inness, brought American landscape painting to maturity.

The common people of the cities and villages, the farms and frontiers had also been furnishing material for the artists. Scenes of everyday life, genre subjects, appealed to the artist, it seemed, in proportion to the growth of the common man. Henry Inman, primarily a portraitist and miniature painter, had produced a number of genre pictures, but William S. Mount is one of the better known of our early painters using this type of subject matter. An exhibition of Mount's paintings and drawings at the Brooklyn Museum in 1942, as well as the recent Cowdrey-Williams book, has helped revive interest in this Long Island artist. George Caleb Bingham, the Missouri painter, remains the ablest and most interesting of these early American scene painters.

One of our greatest American painters, Winslow Homer, can be placed with these genre painters for many of his subjects lay in this field. Homer's painting career spanned the latter half of the nineteenth century. He worked as an illustrator, then served as war correspondent for *Harper's Weekly* just as some of our current painters have been similarly occupied in World War II for *Life* magazine. The years of the Civil War served as the artist's formative period. His work as an illustrator sharpened his powers of observation. With the return of the nation to peace and reconstruction, Homer turned to painting in oils and began to depict the peacetime tasks of his neighbors along the path trod by Bingham, Mount, and others. Homer's approach was, however, more mature; his power of observation much greater; his vision clearer. As his technical facilities increased, his painting improved. He turned to more elemental subject matter—man in relation to nature and the changing aspects of nature. His pictures of the sea rank among the greatest marines ever painted. Here was realistic art without emo-

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tion. But it was eminently selective and powerfully recorded. He depicted the effects of the sea for which he patiently waited. Homer helped clarify the struggles of American painting for a mature indigenous art. He turned it in a naturalistic direction, but his approach to his subject matter expressed the freshness and vitality so characteristic of our country.

At about the same time another realist, Thomas Eakins, was working in Philadelphia. While Homer plumbed the depths of nature, Eakins, with devastating candor and tremendous knowledge, painted the individual, glossing over nothing. As Homer brought one aspect of American naturalism to maturity, Eakins brought the art of realistic portraiture to its highest perfection in this country. Just as Homer's paintings on nature tower over the works of lesser artists who painted similar subjects, so, too, do Eakins portraits make the glossy portraits of a Sargent seem superficial. And there is an inherent beauty, a sense of rightness and color in his figures that have in recent years steadily carried Eakins to the top rank of American painters. After study in Europe, Eakins returned to this country. He taught for years and painted the rowers, prize fights, portraits, and figure groups with a strong affinity for his environment and his country.

This period was one of great industrial and scientific progress. In thirty years, from 1870 to 1900, the population of the country had doubled. The typewriter, the telephone, the phonograph, the electric light all were invented and put into use. The railroad spread like an octopus to the far corners of the land. Pioneers, transfused by the admixture of fresh alien blood, spread westward. Ralph Waldo Emerson had written and Walt Whitman sung of democracy. Writers and reformers called for political and cultural growth to keep step with the country's steady increase in wealth and power. Great fortunes accumulated. Mansions were plastered with large salon pictures. At the same time far-sighted and public-spirited citizens were attempting to channel some of the wealth and power of



*Blowing Run*

*Blackberry Picker*, by Andrew Wyeth

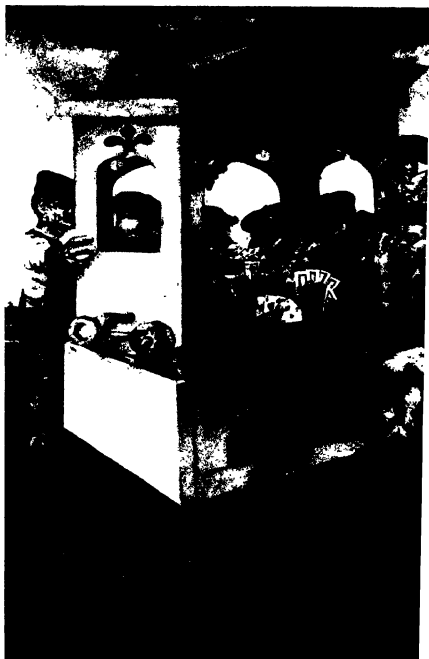




*d Preoccupation*), by Bradley Walker Tomlin

*Winter Twilight*, by Max Weber





*The Siding,*

*The Green Pool, by Revington Arthur*

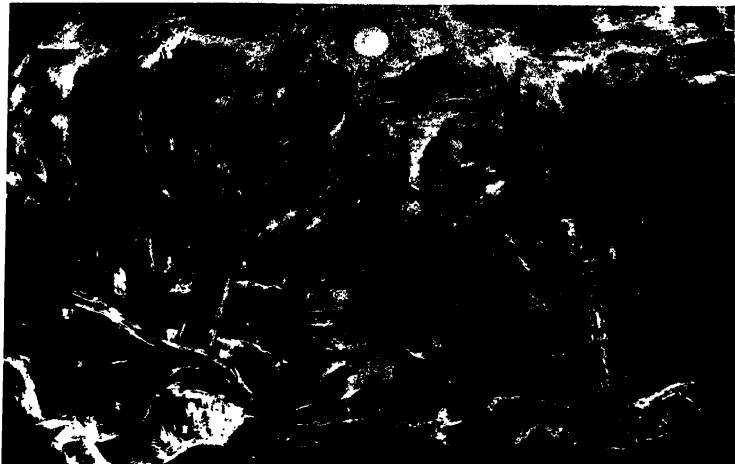




ry Billing

*Swamp Folk*, by Arnold Blanch





*Yellow-Swamp, Minnesota, by B. J. O. Nordfeldt*

*The Bridge, by O. Louis Gu*







*On Sunday Afternoon*, by Anatol Shulkin

*On the Ranch*, by Jerry Bywaters



*Two Figures Resting*, by Marion Greenwood

*Young Clown*, by Walter





by Lamar Dodd

with Figure, by Robert Brackman



Show Window #2, by Kenneth Hayes Miller



these acquisitions into public collections. The beginnings of our vast museums were initiated. The Metropolitan Museum in New York, currently celebrating its seventy-fifth anniversary, was organized. Boston gathered together its various collections of paintings and other objects and incorporated them into a Museum of Fine Arts. Philadelphia, Chicago, and Cincinnati followed. Small and struggling at their inception, these institutions, at first through the patronage of rival magnates who denuded the collections of Europe in their feverish race for vicarious posterity, and later by reason of the efforts of distinguished and learned curators, matured into great edifices which today vie with or surpass Europe's renowned museums in the comprehensive scope of their collections.

While all this activity buzzed around him, while Homer, Eakins, and their contemporaries painted with realistic approach, a sweet and gentle man, Albert Pinkham Ryder, painted in solitary reflection his moody dreams of the sea and country. Living in a world of his own, he created a series of romantic canvases which have earned him recognition as our great poet in paint. He conceived designs which in their abstractions from nature seem to presage the work of later French modernists. A recent visit to study again a group of Ryders reinforced this feeling. The dramatic "Tempest" and the lovely "Forest of Arden" are evidence of the building up of integrated pattern and rhythmic forms. But primarily Ryder represents the high spot in the romantic vein, a powerful and unique figure but yet not detached from the web of American art—not the isolated phenomenon some maintain. There were others who preceded him: Washington Allston, Frederick Church, Albert Bierstadt, who lived across the street from the house where Ryder was born in New Bedford, Massachusetts, William Morris Hunt, and others. He differed from his predecessors in that lyric poetry came primarily from within the artist rather than from the selected subject. This artist who worked over his canvases for years, often to the detriment of their longevity, was destined to influence his successors

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profoundly as any visit to a contemporary exhibition will demonstrate.

Two other Americans less familiar to most of us today had, to a lesser degree, a somewhat similar lyric approach to nature. They were Robert Loftin Newman and Ralph Blakelock. Newman has had too little recognition for his beautiful little biblical and genre canvases. Blakelock, whose career is one of the most tragic in American painting, became mentally disturbed as a result of lack of public appreciation for his dark moonlit landscapes. Incarcerated in an asylum for seventeen years the artist, upon his release, found that his paintings had in the interim achieved spectacular success. One had just been sold for \$20,000. But Blakelock in the few remaining years granted him was never able to appreciate this altered reaction to his work and resultant change of fortune.

CHAPTER VII 🍷 Painting in the United States was not progressing in a vacuum. The trek to Europe for study was still the national habit. Often, as in the early days of the nation, artists remained to play a part in the development of European art. Whistler, one of the foremost of these expatriates, settled in London. There, in spite of considerable controversy, he became an influential figure in European art. His interest in Eastern art and arrangement of color patterns attracted the attention of French progressives of the time who admired him greatly. Whistler's nocturnes, his magnificent etchings of London and Venice have earned him a place in the Hall of Fame. But, of course, to Americans he will be forever known as the creator of the "Portrait of the Artist's Mother." Unfortunately for Mother's Day it hangs in the Louvre in Paris, rather than in an American museum, because the American people were unwilling to pay the \$500 asked for the painting a number of years ago. In 1933 it was insured for a tremendous sum when lent to this country for exhibition.

In Mary Cassatt, we come across the first woman painter to earn a place among our leading painters. She was to be followed by other distinguished painters of her sex. Today they crowd the exhibition halls on equal terms with the males. A native of Pittsburgh, she spent the major portion of her life in France. There she came under the influence of Degas and joined the Impressionist group. Her paintings were acquired for European and American museums, and the artist herself aided many of her American friends in forming their collections. The H. O. Havemeyer collection in the Metropolitan Museum is an excellent example of a discriminating group of paintings selected under her guidance.

John Singer Sargent, one of the most brilliant virtuosos this country has produced, was vanquished by his own tremendous facility. He was fabulously successful both in this country and in Europe, where he spent much of his life. He left a few searching portraits, evidence of the man's possibilities. He also painted some water colors, fresh, full of color and sunlight, and some murals which are best forgotten, as visitors to the Widener Library at Harvard College can attest. When the Metropolitan Museum paid \$90,000 for Sargent's tremendous painting of "The Wyndham Sisters," Sargent had reached the heights. Today his reputation is at its lowest ebb.

CHAPTER VIII☛ Munich, too, had lured many American art students. The dazzling brushwork out of Frans Hals, the dark shadows, left a mark on many Americans who studied there. Two in particular, Frank Duveneck and William Chase, returned to become leading art instructors in this country, Duveneck in Cincinnati, and Chase in New York. Duveneck painted some fine figure subjects. I borrowed his "Woman with Forget Me Nots" from the Cincinnati Museum of Art for the Exhibition of Old Masters and Modern Artists which I arranged for the town of Bloomington,

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Illinois, of which more anon. It was gratifying to see how well this painting held up with outstanding examples by better known names in art history.

Chase moved from Munich to Spain, then to England, where he became friendly with Whistler. He returned to New York to inspire his students with the brilliance of his brushwork. When I came to New York, having left Harvard and the Fogg Museum to come in contact with the backstage workings of a commercial gallery, I had considerable opportunity to study Chase's paintings. It was an exciting event to be sent to collect paintings from the famous old home where the Chase family at that time still resided.

While these influences were at work here, artists in France had been pondering new theories and seeking ways to incorporate them in this approach to picture making. The experimentation resulted from the development of the camera, Helmholtz's experiments with light, and above all a feeling that the ponderous formula painting of the Academy had brought French art to an impasse. Manet, with memories of Goya and Hals, opened the way through the use of planes of balanced color to create form. Claude Monet and the other Luminists or Impressionists, as they were derisively termed, attempted to capture light, to depict the instantaneous aspect of a subject as it was observed by the eye of the painter. This meant the abandonment of form and the architectural building up of a painting for gay, shimmering color achieved through the application of broken color. Others modified Monet's approach but the blacks of the earlier painting had disappeared. Men such as Renoir and Seurat saw how limited was Monet's concentration on impossible scientific attempts to challenge the camera, and employed the impressionistic use of color to secure form.

These exciting discoveries profoundly affected American students in Paris. Twachtman and Childe Hassam were among those who returned with this new approach to painting incorporated in their work. They brought invigorating life to American art. Un-

fortunately, lesser men stereotyped the method instead of using it as a springboard to individual growth. Ernest Lawson and a few others managed to rise above the level of the many unimaginative users of this system of broken-color impressionist painting. In the main it has been taken over by the conservative, unimaginative naturalistic painters. When the painters in the Paris of 1870 first exhibited their paintings they were ridiculed and accused by one critic as "painting worse than anyone has hitherto dared to paint." Today these same painters are already accepted as masters and their imitators have become the bulwark of reactionaries and conservatives.

Hassam himself as he grew older became intolerant of progress. I remember working on a series of radio broadcasts which the Midtown Galleries arranged some years ago for the National Broadcasting Company. Outstanding figures in the art world were invited to be interviewed over a nation-wide hookup. Hassam was asked to prepare material for such a broadcast. The polemic he brought in was so vicious in its attack on most of the exhibiting bodies in this country that the directors of the station, fearing libel suits, requested that the material be revised. After much persuasion the elderly painter, then in his eighties, agreed to make the required deletions. The changes were made, but insertions made elsewhere in the second draft were even more bitter than the attacks in the first version. Needless to say, Mr. Hassam never appeared on the scheduled broadcast.

While Europe was engaged in a ferment of aesthetic inquiry and experimentation, the United States was pushing ahead rapidly on the road to material and intellectual expansion. The Spanish-American War, bringing in its wake the annexation of the Philippines, Guam, and Puerto Rico, brought us closer to world-power classification. Educational facilities widened. Great industrial corporations began their upward climb, amassing huge fortunes for enterprising, and often ruthless, magnates. Big homes were decorated



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with paintings by both American and foreign artists. The greater the fortune, the greater the name necessary to point up the wealth and power of the purchaser. Attention, therefore, turned to the acquisition of paintings by Europe's most famous old masters. Many museum collections benefited through the generosity of wealthy patrons. The lesser Europeans also appealed, particularly paintings by members of the French Barbizon school of landscape artists. The English portraitists, the Romneys, Gainsboroughs, Lawrences, and the Beechys, *et al.*, filled American mansions and museums, and steadily increased in value. The culmination was the sale of Gainsborough's "Blue Boy" for the reputed price of eight hundred thousand dollars.

The intellectual progress in science and medicine on all sides stirred men's minds. In Europe, Pasteur, the Curies, Lister, Roentgen, and Marconi were blazing new trails which were vitally to affect man's progress. In this country, Thomas Edison and the Wright brothers were setting the stage for a tremendous change in man's mode of living, presaging today's steadily shortening of lines of communication with the rest of the world. In art, the French painter Monet and his fellow artists Paul Gauguin and Vincent van Gogh, two of the most fascinating and tragic characters in art, explored new paths. Japanese prints, stained-glass windows, and the experiments of his colleagues turned Gauguin in the direction of a more decorative art based on color pattern. Van Gogh, in the few short years of his disturbed painting career, used the impressionist vocabulary to paint some of the most personally expressive paintings we have, using color with such emotional power that the intensity of his effort virtually destroyed the man. Their contemporary, Paul Cézanne, was to become the greatest single influence in the art of today, the parent of what is called modern art and also the father of countless sins committed in his name. Cézanne, through the interplay of color planes, sought to portray the internal structure of a thing rather than its external appearance. He stripped appearances

down to their essential volumes, thus opening the way for the abstractionists. Picasso, Matisse, Braque, employed Cézanne's interest in the essential cubes, and the solids on which he built, to evolve their abstractions. Isms, too numerous to mention, developed, each with highly eloquent literary propagandists.

In this country these novel adventures in painting and in aesthetic philosophy were followed with interest by the young and ardent progressives. They wanted to bring some of this excitement into American painting, to put new life blood into our art and shock us into an awareness of the new spirit emerging in American painting.

The Eight or so-called "Ash Can School" of Henri, Luks, Sloan, Glackens, Shinn, Lawson, Maurice Prendergast, and Arthur B. Davies brought a new realism into American painting. Alfred Stieglitz, photographer extraordinary, pioneered at his famous galleries at 291 Fifth Avenue with exhibitions of Rodin, Matisse, Cézanne, and Picasso, and the Americans, Dove, Hartley, Weber, and others. Then came the historic Armory Show to try the patience of critics and public even further.

The results of these valiant efforts were not so immediate as they might have been owing to the shattering effect of World War I. The war did, however, turn American attention across the seas to an even greater extent. After peace began the steady flow of art students to Paris. This hegira continued through the years which saw a rapidly mounting tide of prosperity provide the necessary remittance checks from home. The Paris bars were crowded with art students from this country. Exhibition halls were filled with the work of the better painters, as well as the work of those less talented who were financially able to rent a gallery and purchase review space in French newspapers. Then came 1929 and the bubble collapsed. The eastward tide receded as money from home evaporated. Back poured the artists, many who for years had called Paris and the south of France their home. Here they found early returnees in a chauvin-

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istic reaction against foreign influences and foreign subject matter. In an endeavor to discover a native idiom, certain artists who had floundered through successive European influences sought the answer to their quest in typical American subject matter. These protagonists of American scene painting, Grant Wood in Iowa, John Stuart Curry in Wisconsin, and Thomas Benton in Missouri, thought they had found the key to an American painting. Ably publicized by a popular journalist, they appeared at a psychological moment in this nation's history when the tendency everywhere was toward nationalism. The confusion of isms in Paris at the time, with its attendant almost unintelligible literature no doubt helped. The artists looked about them and found characteristic Americana which they painted in the idiom of the Dutch realists or the Renaissance masters. Countless followers climbed on the band wagon, rushing off in all directions to paint America with the same superficial approach each new movement has always attracted.

Then came the full effect of the depression to turn the attention of sensitive artists to social conditions. From Mexico too had come the heady influence of Rivera, Orozco and others. American scene paintings were crowded on exhibition walls next to lugubrious portrayals of the city slums, of the bread lines, of the living conditions of the downtrodden third of a nation. Unfortunately, most of this painting which rose out of a natural humane reaction against miserable social conditions was more protest than art. An occasional artist, such as Gropper and Evergood, managed to bridge the gap between propaganda and aesthetics, but many of these pictures have disappeared into artists' studios along with some of their extremely anti-social theories. The progressive artist, however, usually remains a liberal politically, which is as it should be, since in his own work he is endeavoring to break away from the norm.

In the black days of bank holidays and soup kitchens, conditions were especially bad for the artists, since public and private expenditures for art are always among the first to be curtailed. When things



*Deborah and Nietzsche*, by Gladys



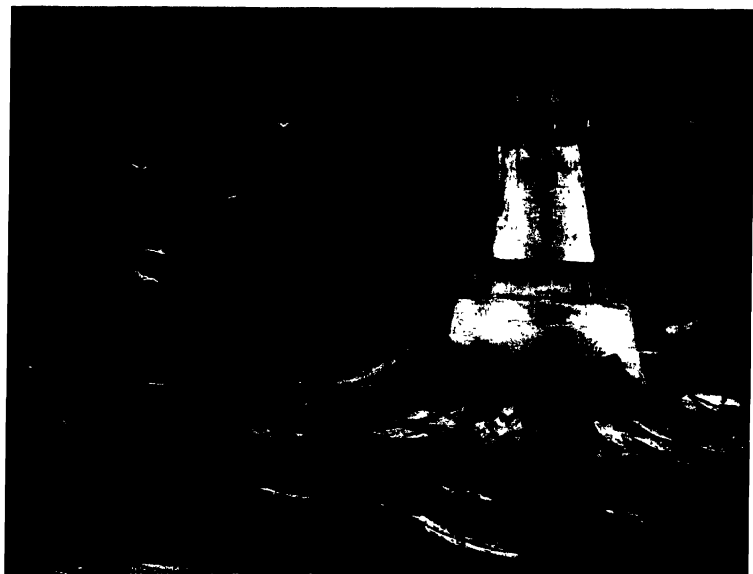
by Paul Clemens



*If This Be Not*

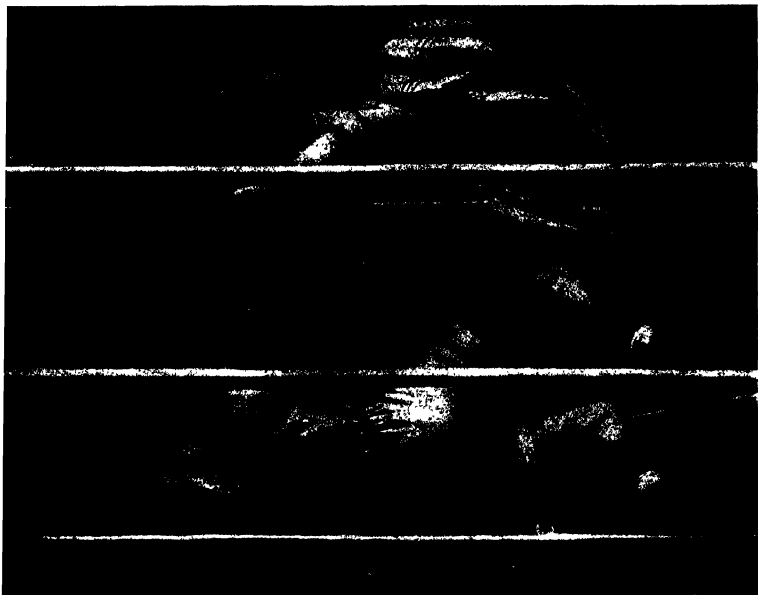


Ogden Pleissner



*The Outpost.*





cher Martin



*Learning to Read, by*



*Altoon with the Tablets of the Law* by Edward Laming



*The Medieval Scribe.*



by Alexander Brook

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were at a tragically low ebb and the artists' very physical existence was threatened, a ray of hope appeared with the news of a government patronage program for American artists. First came the Public Works of Art Project to be succeeded by the Section of Fine Arts plan for the decoration of public buildings, and then the Works Progress Administration Art section. Together they were of incalculable and permanent benefit to American artists and to American art. There is no question but that much of the art of the WPA or the murals of the Treasury's Section of Fine Arts was mediocre. Enough excellent work was produced, however, to make the effort and expense involved extremely worth while. A more tangible result was the lift, both financially and morally, which these programs gave to the dispirited, patronless American artist. The discovery of new talent alone was a by-product which in itself made the expenditure profitable for the nation's cultural progress. The dissemination of art to the far corners of the country, by means of murals, branch galleries, traveling exhibitions, the valuable work on the Index of American Design, all spread seeds whose germination has been of incalculable benefit to the increase of a country-wide concern with works of art.

In the middle thirties conditions began to improve. War clouds over Europe accelerated the return to prosperity as the industrial organization turned to the production of arms for defense, and finally for war. Government projects for the artist were gradually diminished. There was an occasional poster art competition and the army special service department incorporated soldier art in its recreational program.

The changing economic picture in due time had its effect on painting. The American scene school had run its course, not without certain helpful as well as harmful results. It had helped build up an interest in American painters and helped to combat in both artist and public a feeling of the inferiority of our art in relation to the art of other countries. Meretricious it certainly was in its over-

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emphasis of naturalistic subject per se, yet it represents a phase in the spasmodic evolution of American painting. The social conscious fixation had similarly run its course. The repatriates had become part of the native scene, and the School of Paris borrowings they had brought with them were beginning to be felt. Exhibitions of abstract and non-objective art appeared in greater number. In some cases there seemed to be an attempt to replace the war-embargoed French imports which had long skimmed the cream off the American picture market. Foreign dealers, astute enough to arrive before the holocaust, and American galleries who had built up a profitable clientele for foreign pictures, now sought to replenish their dwindling stocks with the work of American painters. They particularly sought local painters working in the neo-Paris tradition they admired. Too, a number of internationally known painters came or were brought to this country during the war. Some remained to enrich the blood stream of American painting with their very personal expression. Others enriched themselves at the expense of those whom they scornfully regarded as materialistic Americans, and fled our shores at the earliest opportunity.

It is a rather difficult task to plot the various trends currently engrossing the painters who today dominate the exhibition world. Attempts have been made to classify certain painters. However, the painters, especially if they have creative experimental tendencies, refuse to be pigeonholed. New York's Museum of Modern Art endeavored to illustrate different tendencies in American painting in two significant shows. The exhibition titled American Realists and Magic Realists was held in the spring of 1943. Later that year the museum opened a show of Romantic Painting in America. Both presentations were well developed and included many important loans which were borrowed to help trace these two types of expression in the history of American painting. Works by some artists appeared in both exhibitions. Others, if their complete work were analyzed, could easily have been shifted from one category to the

other. Some were just inferior pictures admitted to prove a point. Since those exhibitions, some of the artists included have changed over to other methods of expression. The artist though still retaining his own personality in his work exhausts one type of subject matter or his approach to that subject matter, then moves on, to the consternation of his biographer. Much of this shifting about is occasioned by conditions in the changing world in which the artist finds himself. Conflicting tendencies, opposing political philosophies, inventions which eliminate boundaries, speed of travel which vies with that of sound, global wars producing dive-bombers, rockets, radar, V-2 bombs, et cetera, all envelop the artist in a whirlpool of shifting stimuli. Finally comes the devastating unveiling of the Atomic Age to plunge all thinking men into an abyss of terror and futility. Artists' reactions vary. Some recede into their ivory tower, others optimistically endeavor to grasp and hold on to what they consider the verities in their surroundings. Many react emotionally in moody portrayals of nature. Still others search, often confusedly, for new symbols to express their time.

A glance through the reproductions contained in this volume gives an approximation of the many divergent treatments to be found in the work of today's painters. The range is wide: Pleissner, Kroll, Benton, Mattson, Thon, Peirce, Guston, Rattner, Davis, Sokole, et al. In this variety is excitement and growth. To be an interested spectator, a partner in the development, is the opportunity afforded the rest of us. By opening our minds and our eyes we can find common denominators of style and quality here just as the trained eye has found pleasure in a Vermeer as well as in a Van Gogh, in an El Greco as well as in a Rouault.

Granted that some of the paintings are immature gropings or superficial attempts to ride the current band wagon. There have always been such. But there are at the same time exhibiting men of recognizable stature ready to take their place in tomorrow's Hall of Fame. Others of equal caliber are attempting experiments which

will eventually bring worth-while results. If these latter are difficult to accept and you are unable to differentiate between the sincere effort and the work of the charlatan who endeavors to capitalize on the novelty of his sensationalism, don't despair. It may be a slow process, but the fruits of enjoyment plucked in the path to the development of a catholic taste are worth any pitfalls encountered on the way.

Thus, briefly, has been traced the development of the American painter. He was of course not a solitary phenomenon in the arts, but since this is a book on painting he has received major attention. The sculptor, the printmaker, the architect, the man of letters, and the composer, all felt the changing influence of their times and similarly developed in the direction of a national idiom. Some have set off international reverberations. West, Whistler, Epstein, Whitman, Poe, Mark Twain, Hemingway, O'Neill, Frank Lloyd Wright, Copland, Gershwin, and Disney exchanged gifts with other sections of the globe. Though the Museum of Modern Art's exhibition of American art received a very cold shoulder at the 1938 exhibition at the Jeu de Paume Museum in Paris, times may change. Good art will eventually be recognized whether painted by an American in London, a Frenchman in Paris, a Spaniard in Paris, an American in New York, a Japanese in New York, or a Russian in Kansas.

CHAPTER IX☛ Today the galleries in the vicinity of New York's Fifty-seventh Street and in other cities exhibit the work of Americans past and present. But just as the artist of today is the product of notable yesterdays, so is the method of presenting his work for public approbation the outgrowth of years of proselytism. The various attempts to awaken Americans to the art work of their countrymen parallel the growth of painting in this country. Closer acquaintance with the efforts in this direction—the struggles and

failures, and occasional success—may help lessen that timidity so frequently encountered among those visiting the art gallery and museum.

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The first paintings of record in the early colonies were those brought over by the colonists from their homes abroad. These were primarily family likenesses, which the settlers would naturally wish to take with them to a new land. The signboards which lined the early village streets were probably the first paintings actually executed in this country. Early painters were glad to add to their meager income as sign painters. "Face painting" was their primary task and hope for a decent livelihood. Today's portrait photographers are analagous to the early portraitist. For a small sum he executed likenesses of the early colonist, his wife and members of his family. The market was limited, however. When prospects were exhausted in one locality the early limner often went on the road to increase his earnings. The so-called "spot knocker" or roving photographer who traveled through the South in recent years, taking commissions for hand-colored framed photographs, had a precedent in the early itinerant portraitist. Travel at the time was extremely strenuous. The peregrinating artist encountered many obstacles along the way which must have deterred the less hardy. Often in preparation for such an excursion the artist would make ready a series of canvases. He would paint in the complete figure, finishing in detail costume and background. Only the face and sometimes the hands were left unfinished. On his arrival at the home of a prospective sitter, he would set up his canvas on an easel and have the subject sit for the head. One is reminded of the Coney Island photograph studios where the subject poses with his head above an amusingly painted figure. This was very serious work for the itinerant portraitist who painted his way from one community to the next, usually living with one family until he had exhausted all the opportunities in that section.

Many of these early painters conducted other business at the



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same time. They advertised their painting talents along with groceries, books, and the like. These part-time artists competed with the more successful professionals who came over from England, Holland, France, and other European countries. John Smibert, one of the best of colonial painters, also brought a collection of paintings with him. He opened a picture store in Boston where various types of European prints as well as art materials for the practicing artist could be had. This establishment of Smibert's became a meeting place for the leading painters of the day and a center for the dissemination of European influences. Boston, Newport, a thriving seafaring port, the rapidly growing metropolis of New York, Philadelphia, Annapolis, and the prosperous southern cities of Baltimore and Charleston, saw the gradual emergence of a group of professional painters who steadily increased in proficiency. Their portrait fees were small, sometimes six pounds for a good-sized canvas. It is no wonder, therefore, that coach painting, sign painting, and often house painting, helped even the professional to weather the leaner days. Interesting examples of advertisements by artists were to be found, a sample of which is that inserted in the New York Weekly Post-Boy as follows:

*GERARDUS DUYKINCK, living near the old Slip Market in New York, continues to carry on the business of his late Father deceased, viz. Limning, Painting, Varnishing, Japanning, Gilding, Glazing, and Silvering of Looking-Glasses, all done in the best Manner.*

*He will also teach any young Gentleman the art of Drawing, with Painting on Glass; and sells all sort of Window-Glasses, White lead, oil and Painters Colours.*

As such teaching became more available, reports were brought back from England of better instruction to be had in the studio of Benjamin West in London. The more talented headed there when

finances permitted. Matthew Pratt's painting of "The American School" portrays a number of these students of West.

In Philadelphia, Charles Willson Peale, whom we may remember as a painter of Washington, established a museum. This was a forerunner of that city's numerous and venerable art institutions. Peale also established a private school. Most famous of his students were his own children whom he had impressively named Raphaele, Rembrandt, Rubens, and Titian. They all became painters of varying ability. In 1805 the elder Peale helped found the Pennsylvania Academy of Fine Arts which today, under the able guidance of its secretary, Joseph T. Fraser, continues its good work. Another member of the Peale clan, Charles Willson's younger brother James, elevated the art of frame-making through work for his brother. James later became one of our good miniaturists.

One of the earliest collections of old masters brought to the United States arrived in 1804. The artist John Trumbull was thus one of the first to start the westward course of Europe's proud possessions. But unfortunately for Trumbull, and in contrast with the success of later old master dealers, the venture was a financial failure.

These returning artists would set up shop in a city, exhaust the portrait possibilities there, then move on to the next city, often following the social season as do our society portraitists today. Eventually they would find a congenial atmosphere and center their activities around one particular city. This served as a base for future operations. In a very businesslike manner the artist would take space in the local newspaper to advertise his wares, as did Gullager, who, on settling down in New York, proudly announced himself as a "Portrait and Theatrical Painter" prepared to execute "decorations for public and private buildings, frontispieces or vignettes, and painting on silk for military standards, or other ornamental purposes." This type of self-advertising was necessary, for as Copley wrote in 1767, "The people generally regard it [painting] no more

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than any other useful trade as they sometimes term it like that of a carpenter, tailor, or shoemaker, not as one of the most noble arts in the world." In spite of Copley's great success in this country, this attitude disturbed him. His Tory sympathies were, of course, another motivating force. He departed for London never to return.

The successful portraitist was deluged with sitters. Gilbert Stuart, an American in London during the acrimonious days of the revolution, was still able to report that he was kept busy taking care of six sitters a day. Stuart's success continued on his return to this country. His portraits of George Washington alone must have consumed much of his time for he painted over a hundred different portraits of the first President.

A rare phenomenon among these striving painters of the early nineteenth century was John Banvard. Not too well known, Banvard is of interest to us, more for his promotional ideas and tremendous capacity for work than for the quality of his paint. While still in his teens, the enterprising young artist enlisted three or four fellow painters on a projected river tour of a floating art gallery. Making their headquarters at New Harmony, Indiana, on the Wabash River, the lads fitted out a flatboat which they had built for the purpose. A series of dioramic paintings were executed and installed for exhibition on the boat. A tour down the Wabash was planned, with stops at the various river towns to exhibit the paintings much in the manner of the showboats immortalized by Edna Ferber, Jerome Kern, and others.

Banvard's flatboat, however, was a makeshift affair which seemed to find and stick to every sandbar in the river. Progress was slow on the projected itinerary down the Wabash into the Ohio and down the Mississippi to New Orleans. Funds, inadequate at best, quickly disappeared as one delay after another was encountered. The hungry youths were glad to barter admission for produce. Onions, potatoes, eggs, et cetera were cheerfully welcomed when the boat was finally put into a town. As they displayed their exhibition to gaping

townspeople passing ships almost engulfed them, wetting artists and visitors alike. Robbers attacked the ship and illness further harassed the weary adventurers.

When Banvard arrived in New Orleans, he had had enough. He sold out his interest in the boat and settled down to the less harrowing task of painting portraits. These came readily, and Banvard accumulated a little capital. St. Louis was his next stop. Here we find him again involved in the problem of displaying art. He purchased a "museum" which in a short time effectively diminished his savings. But Banvard could not be kept down for long. As a result of commissions received and a fortunate speculation, he was again in funds.

Now Banvard was ready to embark on an adventure which had long occupied his attention. He had earlier read a statement by an English writer extolling the grandeur of the American landscape but deploring the fact that there was not talent in the states sufficiently able to record it on canvas. Banvard decided that he would prove that an American could depict the vastness and power of the American wilderness. He would paint a vast panorama depicting all the lands bordering the great Mississippi River, from its beginnings, from the Missouri, to the point where the river empties into the Gulf of Mexico.

Starting in the spring of 1840 in a small skiff, he began to descend the river, making sketches as he traveled. Day after day, night after night, for many months he endured privations, living off the land and camping along the river at night, in his determined quest for material. When his journey was at last completed, he devoted more than a year to the task of working his sketches into preparatory drawings. At long last, in a building he had constructed for the purpose at Louisville, Kentucky, he embarked on his vast painting program.

A letter from a friend who had visited him described the artist at work. A tremendous drum or roller stood at the end of the large

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studio. As Banvard completed the painting of a section, the canvas, when dry, was wound around the drum. Wrote his friend, "The mode of exhibiting it is ingenious and will require considerable machinery. It will be placed on upright revolving cylinders and the canvas will pass gradually before the spectator." The estimated three miles of canvas was finally completed. After early disappointments—no one showed up the night of the first exhibit at Louisville—crowds finally began coming. The project became a huge financial success. Banvard then took his panorama to other cities with equal profit to himself. In Boston, so great was the interest, the railroads ran special trains to the city. In a little pamphlet published by John Putnam in 1847 there is a record of a meeting in Boston of the governor and other state officials to honor the artist. It is related that Banvard realized a profit of \$50,000 at his Boston exhibition. Europe was Banvard's next objective. There his Mississippi Panorama aroused equal excitement. Queen Victoria praised this early moving picture shown to her privately at Windsor Castle. Later 600,000 of her subjects flocked to see the painting.

CHAPTER XXIII With the opening up of the West and the resultant interest in landscape, there appeared a series of large landscapes painted primarily as exhibition pieces. Since these paintings were not commissioned as were portraits, and the immediate market for them was limited, they were taken on tour by the artists who hoped thus to derive an income from admission fees. Natural pride and the enthusiasm for the landscape of the country resulted in great attendance and lined the coffers of many artists. The excitement aroused by these exhibitions increased the value of the picture. When Thomas Cole died, the paintings remaining in his studio were sold at public auction for \$150,000—a goodly sum then or now.

bition is organized where admission is charged for the benefit of some worthy charity. It has often been suggested that all galleries charge admissions. Proponents of such a plan advance strong arguments. They think the artist should be compensated for the entertainment derived from the exhibition of his pictures. They also feel that if a small fee of ten or twenty-five cents were charged, the visitor would take the exhibit more seriously, spend more time looking at the pictures, and lose that haunted feeling of trespassing without purchasing so often noticed. This is sound reasoning. However, since an admission fee might discourage a great number of people from visiting exhibitions at galleries, the free exhibition system will probably continue.

During the depression, artists organized in an attempt to charge a rental fee for the loan of their paintings to museum and traveling exhibitions. This plan met with opposition and came to an inglorious end, even though several museums had upheld the artists. Possibly the method employed by the artists was too highhanded. There was, however, a sound basis for their plea that they receive some compensation for the use of their pictures to entertain the public. Someday, I am sure, the museum directors will work out a plan with the artists for an equitable solution to this problem. Perhaps, I venture optimistically, increased purchases will be the answer.

In 1839 the opening of the American Art Union in New York inaugurated an interesting project for the exhibition and disposal of works of art. This organization sold annual subscriptions which entitled the purchaser to an original engraving, a monthly art bulletin, and a share in the distribution by lot of paintings and other works of art purchased from artists by the Union during the year. In a short time the Union had built up an amazingly large subscription list and had become an important market for the contemporary artist. A perusal of the various art bulletins, published at the time for members, show paintings won by fortunate residents of New York, Charleston, Worcester, Buffalo, Boston, Hagerstown, Nashville,


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New Orleans, et cetera. From 1839 to 1852 the Union grew increasingly important. Its galleries on lower Broadway held regular exhibitions. Thousands of paintings, sculptures, and engravings were distributed. A list of artists represented in the 1850 annual distribution published in the November 1850 issue of the *Bulletin* contains the names of the best American artists of that time. Asher Durand's "most graceful and poetic creations"; Church's "faithful reflections of Nature in her grandest moods"; Cole's "The Dream of Arcadia"; paintings by Kensett, Cropsey, Leutze, and others were included. Leutze was the painter of the popular "Washington Crossing the Delaware." On the recent occasion of Washington's Birthday, this picture was plucked from the Metropolitan Museum cellar to be rehung because of the public's fondness for it.

Crowds who wished to see the latest offerings flocked to the Union galleries. One celebrity drew special interest at a private viewing, as recorded in the *Bulletin*. President Cozzens addressed a welcome to the distinguished guest in the following words, "I need scarcely assure you ladies and gentlemen of the great pleasures it gives me to receive within these walls, devoted to the genius of painting, a lady who adorns with such brilliant luster the kindred art of music—who comes from her far-distant home to add to our pleasure and to improve our taste—to teach us in the clime of the West, to know and to love the delicious notes of the Nightingale of the North." Miss Jenny Lind responded to the toast and expressed her interest in the merits and extent of the exhibition.

Unfortunately for its sponsors, the Art Union came to a sad end in 1852. The courts, after lengthy litigation, decreed that this public lottery of paintings was illegal. Forced to desist from offering paintings in this manner, the Union auctioned off its pictures and the other assets. So disappeared from view an impressive venture which the Union had proudly proclaimed "has done more to extend the knowledge and love of art among the American people than any other which has ever been established."

In the past few years the Contemporary Arts Gallery, which has started many new artists off on the road to fame, has been attempting to emulate some of the activities of the Art Union on a smaller scale.

CHAPTER XI  George Caleb Bingham, whose familiar genre painting "Jolly Flatboatmen" as well as several other paintings were purchased by the Art Union, has been attracting increasing attention in recent years. Scholars who had hitherto considered Missouri of the middle 1800s a backwoods outpost lacking in cultured citizenry have had to revise their opinions. They have come to respect this Missouri artist who painted the activity of his neighbors in well-designed compositions. A recent book on Bingham by Albert Christ-Janer has helped bring up to date the information available on the artist.

Bingham not only painted the "Country Election," "Stump Speaking," and "Verdict of the People" but himself took part in similar election campaigns. He was one American painter whose public career bears some resemblance to that of the great Flemish painter, Peter Paul Rubens, who was sent on many diplomatic missions. Bingham became a leading citizen of his state and served as state treasurer during the Civil War.

We have been discussing various means of bringing painting to the attention of the public. Bingham's method of exploiting his work is of special interest in this connection. On the completion of a painting which the artist deemed important, he would take the picture on tour. Arriving in a city which had been selected as promising for his purpose, Bingham would arrange to exhibit the picture in a public building. At the exhibition he would attempt to obtain subscriptions for a forthcoming edition of an engraving to be made from the painting on view. In a letter sent from Lexington, Kentucky, in 1853, he discussed one of such excursions. He writes, "I



arrived in this city day before yesterday and last evening succeeded in placing the 'Country Election' where it can be favorably seen tomorrow, which will be Monday. I obtained thirty-five subscribers in Louisville, not more than half the number that doubtless would have subscribed had my subscription book been presented at the first exhibition of the picture. As to the success of my enterprise, it may perhaps be regarded fully equal to what I have a right to expect. I have visited the principal towns in the vicinity of Lexington only, and I have added to my list about one hundred and fifty subscribers since I came to the state, of the best and most reliable class of citizens. I was in Danville last week and secured there a liberal subscription considering the population of the place."

Bingham, however, finds himself too modest to lecture at these exhibitions. "At Danville," he notes, "the weather was so insufferably hot as to render it painful to listen to even eloquent speakers, and I do not know but an attempted speech from me would have been voted a bore." Sometimes Bingham encouraged subscribers by offering them a chance on an original painting.


Bingham arranged with leading engravers to publish his paintings, himself financing the projects which entailed an investment of thousands of dollars. The print was advertised to sell for \$10 and Mr. Bingham offered to provide frames at an additional price of \$6.50. Bingham's lengthy business negotiations with the engraver of "Country Election" make interesting reading. So, too, do similar discussions with the picture houses of Goupil & Company and Williams and Stevens. The name Goupil strikes a responsive chord in the mind of anyone familiar with the career of the great Dutch painter, Vincent van Gogh. Who has not read through the highly successful popularization of Van Gogh's life, *Lust for Life*, of the Dutch painter's employment in the Hague, London, and Paris branches of the Goupil Galleries, and of his brother Theo's long service with the Goupil establishment.

public in the Currier & Ives prints—which are today valuable collectors' items. Currier & Ives were, as they proudly termed themselves, Printmakers to the American People. From 1840, when Currier first captured public interest by putting in the street, three days after the event, his print of the burning of the steamboat *Lexington*, until late in the century, the more than 8,000 lithographs published provided most of the pictorial news for the nation. The millions who read today's tabloids, Sunday picture sections of newspapers, and the picture magazines, had their prototypes in the purchasers of the thousands of colored lithographs issued by the famous firm at 115 Nassau Street, New York. These colored lithographs produced by the firm's artists were not tossed into wastebaskets as are today's photographic records, but were hung on the walls of homes, inns, stables, et cetera, as admired decorations.

Pushcart peddlers with selections made each morning from the firm's bins would hawk their wares from one end of town to the other. Prices were low, from fifteen cents to three dollars. Subjects ranged from deathbed scenes to horse races, from portraits of current beauties to battles of the Mexican War. Through these prints Americans became acquainted with the unfamiliar landscape, with the activities of their neighbors both in the city and country. Subjects like "Westward the Course of Empire Takes Its Way," "The Village Inn," "The Four Seasons of Life," "The Village Blacksmith," "On Chateaugay Lake," "Regatta at the New York Yacht Club," "Home to Thanksgiving" were but a few of the thousands printed. Nor was humor neglected. Lithographs of black-faced comedians made their appearance. One picture in Thomas Worth's "Darktown" series sold 31,000 examples. Louis Maurer, who died only recently, vied with Worth in paintings of horses. Maurer was the father of Alfred Maurer whose venture into modernism brought him to an untimely death.

Many of the lithographs were copies of exciting paintings. Others were originals, commissioned by the firm. The artists varied in

ability just as do today's news photographers. At their best they must be regarded with respect. As Americana they are avidly collected today with prices of the rarest prints ranging in the thousands.

CHAPTER XII  Our mention earlier of the firm of Goupil & Company in connection with Bingham's financial dealings was recalled on a recent visit to the Knoedler Galleries to view that establishment's one hundredth anniversary exhibition. In 1846 Goupil sent Michael Knoedler to this country to establish a branch gallery for the sale of engravings and art materials. The combination gallery and home was established at 289 Broadway. The Art Union galleries were then prospering a short distance away. An illustrated catalogue of artists' materials published by the firm in 1857 announced materials for painting in oil and water colors and also materials for "car, coach, sign and house painting." After the Civil War, Knoedler bought out the Goupil interest and established the firm name of M. Knoedler & Company. As conditions improved and in line with the general northward movement, which still continues, the firm made a number of moves, eventually occupying impressive buildings first at Forty-sixth Street and Fifth Avenue and currently on Fifty-seventh Street.

This hundred-year span of a gallery parallels to some extent the changing taste of a growing country and the increase of individual wealth. If only business secrets could be divulged, the sales books and correspondence of Knoedler's would make a fascinating history of our rugged individualists of the past century and their changing predilections. Enough is known, however, to make interesting reading. The span from the sentimental prints of Alma-Tadema, from Lentze's "Washington Crossing the Delaware," to Rembrandt and Goya, to Renoir, Matisse, and Picasso, is a devious one. And the list of clients—Crocker of San Francisco, Huntington, John Jacob



*Mike and the Christ by Wildb Ponce*



6. ALFA



*The Red Star, April 19, 1941*



Julian Levy



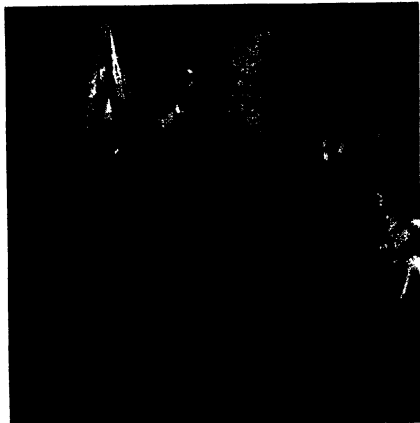
*Elements of Reconstruction* by Julie de Die





*My Wedding*, by Doris Lee

*The New Costume*, by Moses Sover



Astor, the Vanderbilts, Jay Gould, Harkness, Leland Stanford, Frick, Mellon, Widener—names to conjure with in the financial history of America. As wealth and power increased, the greatest names in art were in demand, the very best to symbolize the affluence of the paintings' owners. Knoedler's supplied them, as did emerging competitors. To others passed the task of presenting their contemporaries. Knoedler's dealt in millions, and contemporaries became the occasional luxury of the gallery rather than its serious business. Before the fateful collapse in 1929, the gallery bought \$12,000,000 worth of pictures from the Soviet Government, many of which were presented to the National Gallery by Andrew Mellon.

Duveen's, which occupies the castle on Fifth Avenue, was opened in 1878 as a delftware shop. Under Sir Joseph Duveen it was eventually instrumental in forming the Widener, Frick, Altman, and other notable collections. Morgan, Rockefeller, MacKay, Bache, Huntington were but a few of the names on their books. Sir Joseph, with his international affiliations, popularized the conception of the dealer in old masters as a magnate trading in treasures worth millions. Today visitors approach the entrance of the massive Duveen building with trepidation even when they are prepared to pay admission to the occasional charity exhibitions. An announcement of a current exhibition, noticed in the gallery's window recently, seems to indicate a change of policy.

In Paris, during the difficult days for the Impressionist artists, a dealer, Durand-Ruel, had staked many of them and bought their pictures. He hoped that someday his confidence in their work would be rewarded. An exhibition in London of some of the greatest Degas and other masterpieces attracted not a single sale but popular recognition of the Impressionist masters did come and the Durand-Ruel Gallery prospered. In 1887 a branch was opened in New York which has met with continued success. As the Impressionists became a safe investment, our leading industrialists added them to

their collections. Other galleries, many of which were branches of European galleries, flocked here to share in the big money, also specialized in coin-of-the-realm old masters or established Frenchmen.

The galleries primarily concerned with American paintings had their beginnings in the early print and paint shops, in the artists' studios and museums of colonial days. They flourished and fell, sponsoring their contemporaries, then disappearing as booms and panics periodically beset the country. Artists' exhibitions in their own studios were sources of sales. Auction galleries exhibited and sold American paintings and there were dealers who occasionally presented the work of Americans.

Private patrons such as the wealthy New York merchant, Luman Reed, patronized the American artists and filled his home with their work. He also commissioned artists to execute paintings for him, Asher Durand to do portraits of the country's presidents, and Thomas Cole to do a series of landscape panels.

The Macbeth Gallery is today one of the oldest of the American galleries. Founded in 1892 it was, at that date, the first gallery devoted entirely to the sale of American painting. Montross, Kraushaar, and some others occasionally showed Americans at that time. Macbeth was a partner in the well-known print firm of Keppel & Company when he embarked on his new venture. His clients, who were interested in his welfare, warned Macbeth, "If you will go along with this foolish idea of yours, you will either starve or commit suicide." Undeterred, the Macbeth Gallery opened on April 12, 1892, at 237 Fifth Avenue, announcing to the public that "The work of American artists has never received the full share of appreciation that it deserves, and the time has come when an effort should be made to gain for it the favor of those who have hitherto purchased foreign pictures exclusively." The list of Americans given their first one-man show at this gallery reads like a roster of American notables of the past fifty years. Arthur B. Davies was

given a studio at one time above the gallery. From the studio came canvases still wet to be hung on the walls of the gallery. Davies always felt free to borrow all the cash that was in the till.

This Davies incident reminds me of a similar studio above the Midtown Galleries, occupied for a time by Waldo Peirce. Daily, Peirce would bring the painting on which he was working down to the gallery to try the picture in a frame and get my reaction to his progress. Before the studio was furnished, there were no chairs available. Waldo, searching for something on which to seat his model, a charming young ballerina, found a cast stone portrait head of the gallery director, modeled by Arline Wingate, in the nearby storage room. Waldo still maintains to incredulous listeners that a certain now famous ballet dancer posed for him sitting on my head.

CHAPTER XIII☛ The Armory Show held in 1913 was a steppingstone in the progress of American painting, as well as a means of shaking the American public loose from the regressive lethargy into which it had sunk at the end of the century. Frederick James Gregg wrote in the preface to the catalogue of the exhibition, "There can be no life without change, as there can be no development without change. To be afraid of what is different or unfamiliar is to be afraid of life. And to be afraid of life is to be afraid of truth, and to be a champion of superstition. This exhibition is an indication that the Association of American Painters and Sculptors is against cowardice even when it takes the form of amiable self-satisfaction."

The exhibition was the result of a frank desire on the part of a group of American painters to show what was happening abroad in the arts and at the same time to cultivate a greater interest in the work of progressive painters in this country. Through the aid of Arthur B. Davies, who was already an established and successful

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artist, a project was set in motion which grew from its rather modest original conception to a program of great magnitude. The plans gradually matured, aided by the financial backers secured through the unselfish interest of Davies. Walt Kuhn, today a respected American painter, who was one of the prime movers in the organizations, was sent abroad to see and procure outstanding works of art for the exhibition. He canvassed Germany, France, and England for examples of exciting new developments being produced and shown in these countries. Walter Pach, lecturer and author, living in Paris at the time, was extremely helpful. The cream of the exhibition galleries and artist studios in Cologne, Paris, and London was reserved by the tireless workers for shipment to this country.

After many trials and tribulations, the exhibition finally opened on February 17, 1913, at the armory of the 69th Regiment at Lexington Avenue and Twenty-fifth Street which had been engaged for the display. Included were almost two thousand works by more than three hundred exhibitors. To choose from the many applicants among American artists for exhibition space, a jury had made selections. Many of today's leading painters, reproductions of whose works are included in this volume, took part in this exhibition. These were presented along with works by Cézanne, Renoir, Van Gogh, Redon, Lehmbruck, Picasso, Matisse, Brancusi, Duchamp, Kandinsky, as well as other older, more readily understood artists such as Ingres, Degas, and Courbet. Tremendous effort and expense had been lavished in the exhibition. Walter Pach was indefatigable in his efforts to promote the show. A voluntary sales staff contributed its services. The initial reaction was slow in coming, but it was like a calm before a storm. When the explosion came, it was tremendous. Crowds from all walks of life flocked to see what all the furore was about. Some roared with laughter, others were furious in denunciation. Still others came back again and again to study and admire. Marcel Duchamp's "Nude Descending a Staircase," compared by one writer to "an explosion in a shingle

factory," was singled out for virulent condemnation. Accidentally hung upside down, the picture added fuel to the publicity. Sales finally came. Requests poured in from other cities. Chicago clamored for the show. When it arrived there, preceded by effective ballyhoo, the furor was repeated. Art students attempted to hang Matisse in effigy. A Boston show followed, but in typical Bostonian manner the reaction was more reserved. Today, more than thirty years later, this city remains one of the country's most impenetrable citadels of arch-conservatism, in spite of valiant efforts by various local organizations.

The editor of the *Independent* magazine published at the time a scathing review of the exhibition. But in his introduction to the writer's article he quoted a very pertinent comment of a layman heard at the armory opening. "Whatever you think of this show, our art can never be quite the same again."

The exhibition had many repercussions not only in the art field but in our way of life. Hard-headed businessmen may have considered themselves immune to the idiosyncrasies of extremists in the arts. Consciously or perhaps unconsciously they were affected. Printing, advertising, color, packaging, all experienced considerable change. Interior decoration felt the effects. Designers of automobiles and other industrial products were inspired. Sometimes the results were sad, but the way was opened for the streamlining of the twentieth century in this country.

The Armory Show had its unfavorable reactions as well. Had the American artist been able to continue to present notable work in ensuing years, he might have taken advantage of the attention gained as the result of the Armory Show. He might not have been subordinated, as he was for years, by the avalanche of French art by which we have been engulfed. This included fine examples as well as the studio scrapings. Experiments which the French artist may never have shown or which he would be glad to forget have poured into this country to be exhibited as masterpieces of

the School of Paris. Paintings, drawings, and sketches, with a well-known signature as the only rewarding feature, have been sold at exaggerated prices to our *avant-garde* collectors. Their only appeal should have been to the autograph collector.

Gradually, as the helter-skelter boom days of the twenties vanished and the reflective days of the depression matured the thought processes of our collectors, demand for quality reasserted itself. Prices for the better French imports soared. The poorer things were winnowed out of the better collections, often to appear at auction. Unfortunately for the new crop of advanced collectors, they, too, were impressed by signatures and foreign nationality. They bought and the cycle continued. In the heat of bidding at an auction gallery, the contestants often forget that more important examples by the same or superior artists are usually available at lower prices in the collections of reputable galleries. And in the contemporary American galleries they can choose from a wide selection of the artist's finest and most recent work whereas the auction frequently limits them to second-rate or castoff items.

CHAPTER XIV ♣ The dark days of the early thirties had made deep inroads in the New York galleries when the Midtown Galleries opened in February 1932 to show the work of living American artists. It was admittedly a foolhardy venture in that year, to be further complicated by the bank holiday the following year and ensuing years of additional distress. The optimism of youth, however, managed to overcome hazards which in retrospect have a strange nostalgic unreality, but at the time represented terrifying mental and physical obstacles. I shudder at the thought of the bank which never reopened after the bank holiday, of notices of marshal's sales plastered on my door, of interminable legal summonses, of disconnected telephones, of extinguished lights, of meal-less days. But those accounts belong more properly in a book of

memoirs to which I may get around in the far-distant future. I watched with trepidation established galleries give up the ghost after struggling vainly to keep open their doors. Others pulled in their horns and by dint of economy and perseverance were able to continue their activities. These were to be finally "saved by the bell," in boxing parlance, by improving conditions of the prewar and then war years.

Conditions for the American artist deteriorated similarly. Various attempts, of course, were made to help alleviate his lot. The opening of the Whitney Museum of American Art on Eighth Street was an extremely important step in the right direction. Mrs. Harry Payne Whitney, a talented sculptor, had for many years previous given tangible evidence of her genuine solicitude for the welfare of her fellow artists. As far back as 1908 she had opened two galleries in her own studio at Eighth Street for the exhibition of work by talented painters and sculptors. Henri, Bellows, Luks, Sloan, and Lawson are but a few names of those invited to show at Gertrude Vanderbilt Whitney's studio. Later these galleries were expanded into a club. A library was fitted out and a meeting place reserved where old and young artists met to exchange views and inspire each other. In 1928 the Whitney Studio Galleries was organized to exhibit and sell works of art, especially of those artists who were not represented by dealers.

The work of the American artists shown at the Whitney Studio began to attract increasing attention. Commercial galleries had begun to show the art of these progressive Americans. It was consequently decided that the Studio Galleries had served its purpose and that henceforth the Whitney could best serve as a public museum devoted to the exhibition and acquisition of American art. In November 1931 the Whitney Museum of American Art was formally opened in the remodeled studio building at 10 West Eighth Street, with Mrs. Juliana Force as its energetic and determined director. Through its exhibitions and its purchases the Whit-



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ney has served as a guide to other museums throughout the land. Many a museum director or trustee has been able to cite the example of the Whitney Museum's activities in the field of living American art, to substantiate the worth of his own purchases. There have been, of course, criticism of Whitney exhibitions and of the museum's acquisitions. Some have been well founded, others ill-reasoned or born of prejudice. More important, however, and more lasting than any single purchase or any exhibition, has been the museum's sustained effort to expose the public to the work of our better contemporary artists. By this endeavor, and especially by reason of its investment of many thousands of dollars each year, it has given solid assurance of its belief in the stability of American art and in the worth of the American artist.

In those of us who have regularly followed the activities of the museum, who have attended its previews and browsed in its comfortable galleries, the proposed amalgamation of the Whitney with the venerable and massive Metropolitan Museum of Art arouses a feeling of sadness. Artists and visitors speak feelingly on the subject of the closing of the Eighth Street institution. They fear the intimate atmosphere so seldom encountered will be lost in the move to Eighty-second Street.

Recent plans for expansion revealed by the Metropolitan Museum on the occasion of its seventy-fifth anniversary, announcing the contemplated segregation of the Whitney in a separate wing, bring hope that the Whitney identity and character may not be altogether lost. Having opened my own galleries a few months after the founding of the Whitney Museum, I have always looked to the Whitney as a bulwark to sustain my own determination when circumstances at certain trying periods made the cause appear quite hopeless.



*Pemaquid Lobster* by M

FINCE BY THE SEA, BY CARICATURE GALLERY





*Two Bathers*, by Bernard Karbiel

*Button Falls*, by Henry Schmale





*Thomas Raeburn White, Esq., by Franklin Watkins*

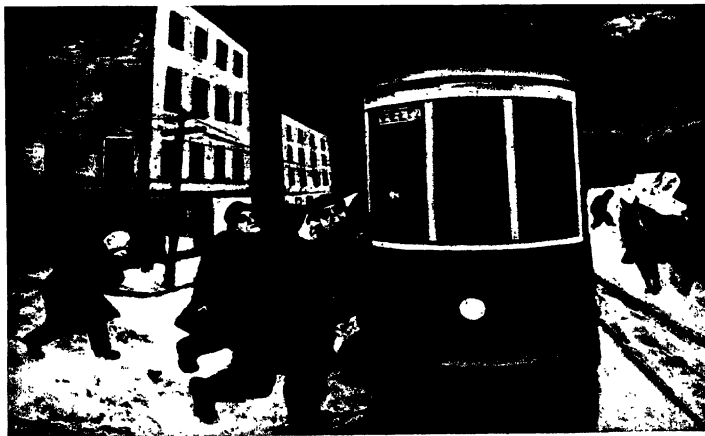


*Pursuit, by Reginald*



*Blacksmith Shop, by Jacob Getlin Smith*

*Winter, by Gregorio Preste*





*Fantasia on a Theme by Dr. S.*

ctions, by Peppino Mangravite





*Thomas Wolfe*, by Douglas Gorsline



*Frankie Loper*, by George

*Landscape with Poppies*, by Peter Blume



*The Fire Eater*, by Franklin Watkins



*It, Vase and Mandolin*, by Nicolai Cikovsky








*omen*, by Iver Rose



*Nude with Cat*, by

*Razing Old Post Office, New York*, by Ernest Fienert



CHAPTER XV  The gala celebration of the Metropolitan Museum's seventy-fifth anniversary calls attention to the tremendous growth, both in size and number, of institutions devoted to the public display of objects of art. The elaborate remodeling plans of America's greatest museum merit support, for the obvious intent is to make the riches of the vast museum more readily available to the visitors who daily swarm through its galleries. The proposed reconstruction should make it easier for an individual to come to the Metropolitan without succumbing to "museum fatigue." The magnet-like attraction of distant galleries glimpsed through open doorways has always drawn visitors from one room to the next with but a few seconds' glance at the objects which crowd the walls. When the bell signals the closing hour, there is a jumbled recollection of countless images and a feeling of satiety which recalls the little boy who had gorged himself on too many sweets.

Separate entrances should result in a less hurried scrutiny of the items in each room and cause the spectator to confine his attention to one special section for the day.

The officials of an institution of such vast possessions have a heavy responsibility. Scholarship and taste in selection must be of the highest. Methods of presentation must be stimulating and on a plane worthy of the rarities possessed. The educational efforts must be progressive, and facilities available to teachers, students, scholars, and laymen. They must stimulate and encourage the creation of a vital living art, as well as interpret the art of the past.

Visitors from every section of the country, from all parts of the globe, make special trips to Eighty-second Street to visit the Metropolitan. They have been taught to look here for the best examples of the art productions of all ages, including the present. Whenever the contemporary American collection is temporarily off the walls of the museum, angry protests are heard from out-of-town visitors.

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Even though there have been times when we wished that it were not so, the Metropolitan's seal of approval, as indicated in the purchase of a contemporary painting, does impress the layman, particularly outside of New York. That is decidedly an obligation for the purchase committee, but at the same time a challenging opportunity to make selections worthy of the esteem in which the museum is held.

Seventy-five years ago, in 1870, when the Metropolitan was formally chartered, there were few stable public art collections. There had been tentative beginnings in New York, Philadelphia, Boston, and Charleston, but for the most part there were to be found only the various private collections and historical societies which were later to be incorporated into the museums. Even in Europe before this time there were only a few fairly recent public art museums. The great Palace of the Louvre in Paris had only come into existence in 1793. Starting in the 1870s, public art museums in this country appeared in increasing numbers and have continued their expansion ever since. Today, almost every city in this country with a population over 100,000 has an art museum. In the larger cities of the eastern seaboard and in some of the West coast cities more than one of such organizations is often found. Many of the smaller cities also can point with pride to well-housed collections. And many of the smaller art associations carry on elaborate programs in libraries and other suitable public buildings.

There has also been a remarkable growth of late in the formation of college and university art organizations, usually in conjunction with an active art department. This has been particularly noticeable in the West. Chicago, Illinois, Iowa, Michigan, Minnesota, Nebraska, Oberlin, are among the many colleges and universities extremely active in this field. Cranbrook Academy of Art has recently opened a handsome new museum building. This further implements a teaching program headed by Carl Milles, sculptor, Eliel Saarinen, architect, and Zoltan Sepeshy, painter.

Reports of ambitious postwar plans are likewise encouraging. The Des Moines Art Center, under the wise guidance of Paul Parker, has an exciting new building under construction and is developing plans for a community and state-wide program which should set a pattern for other cities.

These broad educational programs in which so many of our best museums and universities are engaged, with their special temporary exhibitions, teacher training, student visits, and the encouragement of local artists, are laying the foundations for a wide expansion of interest in the arts. In some cities the entire project becomes a civic enterprise with all the cultural organizations participating. At Utica, New York, the Munson-Williams-Proctor Institute has demonstrated how in a few short years the enthusiastic co-operation of the townspeople can be secured. In Pittsburgh the arts, crafts, and music societies have joined forces for mutual and public benefit.

Private philanthropy and civic pride have co-operated in the foundation of many of these organizations. Contributions have often come from unexpected sources. A ten-million-dollar bequest to the Metropolitan Museum came from a wealthy publisher, Frank Munsey, who is reported never to have set foot in the museum. How the Swope Art Gallery at Terre Haute came into being is another amazing story, the like of which occasionally crops up to confound the informed. It was told to me by John Rogers Cox, painter and museum director, to whom befell these strange and exciting adventures. In Terre Haute there lived a jeweler who prospered and eventually owned the building occupied by his and other shops. In his later years he retired and went to Florida to live. In 1929 he died, and when his will was read, to the surprise of everyone, especially the residents of Terre Haute, he had left a fortune of approximately \$2,000,000 for the erection and maintenance of an art museum for the benefit of the city of Terre Haute. The museum, according to his plan, was to be installed in the upper floor of the

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building in which his jewelry shop was located. Swope had never bought any works of art or shown any interest in art. But his will had been written in 1903, indicating a lifetime interest in the project. For twelve years his relatives contested the will, and it looked as though Terre Haute would never have its museum. Cox had studied art at the Pennsylvania Academy in Philadelphia and was back in Terre Haute, working as a teller in a local bank, but hoping to return eventually to his painting someday. Called from work one day by one of the executors of the estate, the young man was told that the Swope estate had been settled through payment of various sums to different relatives, and the balance, still considerable, would be used for the museum. Cox was offered the position of director, and the twenty-four-year-old bank clerk, trembling with excitement, hurriedly accepted.

Visits to Chicago and New York followed. Plans for the museum matured, and pictures by important American contemporaries were gradually and knowingly selected. In 1942 the new museum opened. In an editorial at the time, Peyton Boswell, editor of the *Art Digest* magazine, which devoted a special issue to the opening of the fledgling institution, wrote appropriately, "Today it is possible for a young museum in a small Midwestern city to usurp, through alert leadership, the royal robes of its august elders."

Cox went into the Army, and the active and discriminating buying he had initiated was halted. It is hoped that the Swope Gallery will once more resume its fine work and again serve as an incentive for other museums to form collections of outstanding work by the progressive living artists.

Our world fair exhibitions have been somewhat in the nature of an extension of museum activity. The Century of Progress exhibition held in 1933 at the Art Institute of Chicago was a magnificent exhibition which drew tremendous crowds—even outdrawing highly ballyhooed activities of the Midway. Reproductions of over-sentimentalized paintings included in a previous Chicago exhibi-

tion, the 1893 Columbian Exposition, give ample evidence of the improvement in public taste. In New York and San Francisco in 1939 and 1940 art both old and new were lavishly displayed before the curious millions who thronged the world's fairs held at opposite ends of the country.

The state fair art exhibits run up astonishing attendance figures. At the Minnesota State Fair a fine arts gallery has been a feature of the exhibit each summer for more than thirty-five years. The large and varied collection annually attracts about a million spectators in a ten-day period. I have sent several exhibitions which have been effectively presented in handsome, well-lit galleries. At Pomona, California, the Los Angeles County Fair, with the painter Millard Sheets in charge, has presented prize exhibitions of national scope. An attendance of 500,000 in seventeen days certainly dwarfs the records of some of our well-attended museum exhibitions.


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CHAPTER XVI☛ During the early thirties, patronage of the artist by museums and the occasional collector helped soften the blow for but a limited few of the painters. When conditions were at their very worst, a new and unexpected client appeared in the offing. Through the influence and solicitation of the humanitarian economist and painter, Edward Bruce, and other high-minded men and women, the United States Government was induced to inaugurate a Public Works of Art Project. The country was divided into a certain number of regions from each of which artists were selected to execute paintings and other works of art at a weekly salary. The government thus became the largest single employer of artists this country had ever known. Excellent work was produced by fine painters. One of the more amusing incidents of this program was the reaction of the Navy against the showing of "The Fleet's In" by Paul Cadmus. The young artist was thus catapulted onto the front pages of most of the newspapers in the United States

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and to a prominence in American art which he has enjoyed ever since.

The results of the P.W.A.P. were so good that the Treasury Department was encouraged to establish the Section of Fine Arts for the employment of artists on the decoration of public buildings. Many fine murals resulted. Many, of course, were but enlarged easel pictures by painters doing their first murals. Others were obvious imitations of the Mexican muralists. However, as Waldo Peirce, whose wit is surpassed only by his humanity, writes in a recent monograph published on his work, "If a Beethoven or a Leonardo had only survived thanks to such a program, who would claim a foul if a lot of nobodys got their spaghetti? . . . Truly great artists are born and not made. It is hardly possible to produce overnight symphonic masterpieces, notable literature, and fine art by any government program unless it be there already. But the present administration at least made a try to sustain the artists during a difficult period."

CHAPTER XVIII  Another vehicle for attracting attention to American painting made its appearance in 1936 with the publication of *Life* magazine. Beginning with an occasional feature story on an art subject, the editors found that they had uncovered a very considerable number of subscribers who desired art with their news. When art was neglected, readers were quick to write in protesting. Under the editorship of Margit Varga, a sensitive painter and writer, the art department became a regular feature of the magazine. Well-planned color stories on the old and modern artists appeared with increasing regularity. Millions of readers of all types began to accept, as a matter of course, the latest in contemporary work, even though it differed radically from the usual popular magazine and calendar art to which they had been accustomed.

*Life* had been experimenting with the problem of commissioning prominent painters to depict scenes of American life for the magazine when the war came. An extensive program was worked out which resulted in the sending of American painters as artist correspondents to all parts of the globe to cover the various phases of the war. When Congress, with little foresight, refused to allocate sufficient funds to finance a group of artists already at various battle fronts through a similar government program, *Life* stepped in and added most of the artists to its staff of correspondents. As Peirce commented in the same article quoted previously, "Somebody in Washington repudiated the scheme of sending some of our artists overseas to record the war scene. . . . Misapplication of national funds, I suppose. The total upkeep wouldn't have been much more than the price of a few army mules."

Much of the work brought back by the correspondents is factual reporting. Aesthetic content there is, however, in the work of some artists who were not overcome by the immensity of the problem which confronted them. They managed to retain a proper perspective. Many of these paintings have toured the nation's museums and it is rumored that they will eventually be installed in a national war art museum, probably in Washington. We hope that there will be added at a later date other paintings of the war, which I feel certain will be done after the material has been thoroughly digested, painted either by these same correspondents, possibly by soldier artists, or perhaps even by painters of imagination, who never saw the conflict.

*Life's* feature stories on artists are now being resumed. Tear sheets of the art stories should again go to schools throughout the country for the benefit of students. Perhaps, with better paper available, better inks, and better color experts, the reproductions will improve to make the magazine a still more potent factor in the popularization of painting in this country.

The appearance of television will doubtless add to the effective-



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ness of radio as a transmission belt for art appreciation. More than a dozen years ago the Midtown Galleries used the medium of radio to advantage. On a program entitled "Art Appreciation for All," presented over a National Broadcasting Company network, leaders in the art world were interviewed. Round-table discussions by artists were an interesting feature of the series. Prize awards were announced, the opening of national exhibitions presented, and discussions of current shows were heard over these broadcasts. The response from listeners was extremely gratifying. A Sunday-afternoon series of broadcasts on famous paintings called "The Story Behind the Picture," which I wrote in 1935 for Station WOR, drew thousands of requests for copies of the broadcasts. The dimes which poured into my morning mail along with these requests helped provide many a meal at a very precarious time in the gallery director's existence.

At that period I also started a program of traveling exhibitions which has been continued to this day. It has been missionary work and still must be classed as such. There is a tremendous volume of correspondence involved, and an irritating lack of sales has often tempted me to discontinue the circuiting of these shows. However, the grateful reports from the small towns and universities which I have received annually encouraged me to continue. Today's increased sales from such exhibitions make me feel that the effort has been worth while.

As I periodically glance over my file of correspondence from the directors of museums and university art departments, from presidents and secretaries of art associations, I find revealing data on changing tastes in both the large and small cities throughout the country. Such exhibitions over the past dozen years must have had some effect in the gradual development of understanding that brings the increased sales noticed today. There will always still be with us, however, the exhibition chairman who writes a dozen excited letters regarding a forthcoming show, but, once the exhibition



*Columbus Circle, by*

*Beast Enchanted, by Darrel Austin*





by Smika Smikhovitch



*Fisherman's Morning, b*

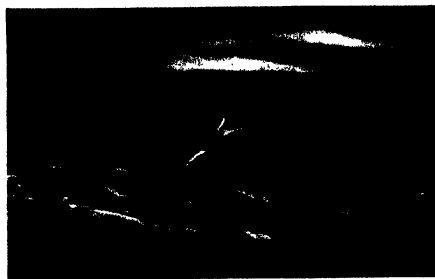


Robert Gwatlines



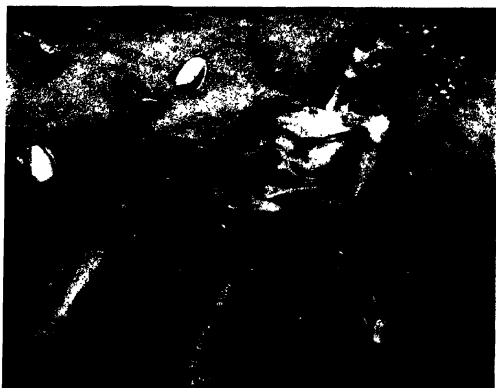
White Cloud, by John Rogers Cox

Sea Gulls, by William





*Girls and Bananas, by*



ng, by Paulen Utting

*Fish Market*, by Frank di Girola





*The Daily News by \**





*Rockport*, by Stuart Davis

is on the walls, finds neither time nor interest to answer any suggestion that local patrons might wish to retain for permanent enjoyment, one of the paintings in the show.

These exhibitions have been varied in make-up. Group exhibitions of oil paintings, water colors, drawings, and exhibits of prints have been sent out with two or three examples by each of my stable of artists. One-man shows, including work in various media, have been much in demand as well as exhibits containing several examples by five to eight different artists. A list of places to which these exhibitions have gone reads like a transcontinental road map.

Butler Art Institute of Youngstown, Ohio; Davenport Municipal Art Gallery; University of Oklahoma; Brooks Memorial Art Gallery of Memphis, Tennessee; Rockford, Illinois, Art Association; Columbus, Georgia, Art Association; Fort Wayne, Indiana, Museum; Abilene, Texas, Museum of Fine Arts; Blanden Memorial Gallery, Fort Dodge, Iowa; Rochester, New York, Memorial Art Gallery; Omaha's Joslyn Memorial Art Gallery; University of Wisconsin; Amherst College; El Paso's College of Mines and Metallurgy; the Currier Gallery at Manchester, New Hampshire; University of Georgia; Norfolk Museum; Kansas City Art Institute; Dallas Museum; Minnesota State Fair; Cedar Rapids Art Association; Lehigh University; University of North Carolina; Neville Public Museum of Green Bay, Wisconsin; Washington County Museum of Hagerstown, Maryland; Milwaukee Art Institute; Scranton's Everhart Museum; and David Strawn Gallery, Jacksonville, Illinois, are some of the stops.

Indiana University, Sweet Briar College, University of Iowa, Lincoln University, Lawrence College, University of Nebraska are numbered among the universities and colleges listed on my schedules. The Isaac Delgado Museum of New Orleans; the New Britain, Connecticut, Art Museum; Springfield, Illinois, Art Association; the George Walter Vincent Smith Art Gallery of Springfield, Massachusetts; Utica's Munson-Williams-Proctor Institute;

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the Houston Museum of Fine Arts; the Los Angeles Museum; the Honolulu Museum; Santa Barbara's Faulkner Memorial Art Gallery; the Colorado Springs Fine Arts Center, and many others have been included in various itineraries arranged for these traveling shows.

The exhibitions of drawings I circuited year after year with little sales results have, to my great pleasure, in the last couple of years attracted more and more purchasers. It has been equally pleasant to watch such organizations as the Albany Institute of Art, the Los Angeles Museum, and the National Academy of Design inaugurate drawing exhibitions. Sales have been surprisingly good. The Whitney Museum has long shown and purchased drawings, and the Art Institute of Chicago has regularly presented drawings in its international exhibitions of water colors and drawings. Bartlett Hays, director of the Addison Gallery at Andover, Massachusetts, has for years purchased drawings for the Andover collection, thus forming an excellent and comprehensive collection at comparatively little cost.

Drawing often represents the artist's first flush of creative enthusiasm, and frequently has a spontaneity lacking in the painting. Anyone who has ever had any contact with the Fogg Museum could not but have developed an interest in artists' drawings. Professor Paul Sachs's drawing collection provided a stimulus that has had wide ramifications through the students who have scattered to provide many of the nation's museums with directors. In spite of Tom Benton's exhortations against Fogg men, I am sure he must admit that our influence has not been wholly bad.

One of my most pleasant memories resulted from an invitation to plan and direct an exhibition for the small Midwestern town of Bloomington, Illinois. Bloomington is a wide-awake, progressive town of 30,000 situated in the corn belt, midway between Chicago and St. Louis. The town had a reputation for being promotionally minded. Possibly it was the proximity of several uni-

versities, or just the good taste and civic spirit of a few leaders in the community, which directed their attention toward the arts. The town boasted an art association which had held exhibitions in the public library for fifty years and frequently exchanged shows with the neighboring towns of Decatur, Peoria, and Springfield. Raymond Wakeley, a local businessman who spent his spare time visiting the art galleries, while on buying trips to New York, proposed an important painting exhibition as a civic enterprise. Other businessmen seemed interested. Wakeley came down to discuss the matter with me, to see if it were possible to secure a group of famous old paintings for a small town. I thought it could be done and agreed to direct the exhibition if an equal number of contemporary American paintings were included. My condition was accepted and we set to work—somewhat dubious about the reaction of potential lenders to the exhibition.

Early replies to my requests for loans were as expected. Why lend to a town of such small size? Let the people go to big neighboring cities. How many people could you get to an exhibition in a town of 30,000? A few hundred probably. These and similar reactions greeted me. Undaunted, I continued, blithely requesting the most important pictures in the various museum collections, and receiving polite but firm refusals. Then, Paul Gardner, director of the wealthy William Rockhill Nelson Gallery at Kansas City, crashed through with a promise to lend an important El Greco and the familiar "Bubble Blowers" by Chardin. Other museums, reassured by the Nelson Gallery's participation, granted loans. The ice, it seemed, had been broken. In rapid succession the Art Institute of Chicago agreed to lend me a Winslow Homer and several other pictures. The Whitney Museum offered its famous Bellows prize-fight picture, "Dempsey and Firpo." With a notable list of museum loans, I turned to the private collectors, and then to the old master dealers, with equal success.

My plan was to present an exhibition which would present some

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of the highlights of Western art from the early Dutch and Italian primitives to the art of today. Having completed my selection of the older painters, I asked the American dealers for their co-operation. With such an impressive group of older paintings already assembled, they could not hold back. They lent me their best pictures to form an extremely fine contemporary American section.

Bloomington, meanwhile, was a hive of activity. The local Scottish Rite Temple was to house the exhibition. To make it suitable for an exhibition, specially constructed portable galleries were devised, and lighting planned which would illuminate each picture perfectly. Bloomington businessmen came down to see me and together we pored over the blueprints. Specifications, in line with my suggestions, were turned over to local electricians, carpenters, and other willing workers.

The whole city worked feverishly. Committees were organized to contact ninety-seven communities within a sixty-mile radius. These they informed of the forthcoming exhibition. Arrangements were made for busloads of visitors and school children to be brought to the exhibition. The local newspaper was tireless in its efforts. Loring Merwin, the editor, wrote daily articles concerning the show. As each picture was selected, I sent on a photograph of the painting with a biography of the artist. This was reproduced in the paper and served as study material for children in the local schools. The students thus were given a four-weeks art course in preparation for the exhibit. Instructors at the local universities, the Illinois State Normal University, and Illinois Wesleyan, edited an elaborate and profusely illustrated catalogue.

Shortly before the opening I arrived in Bloomington to supervise the unpacking of the paintings and the hanging of the exhibition. Back of the large building stood row after row of the stands which were to form the temporary walls. We had to wait, however. The local policemen were holding their annual ball on the exhibition floor until after midnight. We listened impatiently to the

strains of the dance orchestra. Then began a rush of activity. The stands were moved and put in place. Employees of local concerns, window trimmers, electricians, carpenters, sign painters, et cetera, worked the night through, transforming the large hall into a modern beautifully lit gallery. The local news photographer did catch me unawares at 4 A.M. when I dozed off for a few minutes. Fortunately, the photograph was never used.

The next afternoon I started hanging the exhibition, aided by willing assistants selected from members of the art association. The large Rembrandt, "Lamentation Over Christ," about five feet square with an extremely heavy frame, proved quite a problem, as did the tremendous "Portrait of Lincoln" by G. P. A. Healey—this was Lincoln territory—but we finally made it. At 2 P.M. the following afternoon the last pictures were going up. From afar came the strains of band music. As I straightened up from the task of adjusting the last picture, the doors opened. In marched a uniformed contingent of American Legion's firing squad, impressive with their silver hats and guns. The exhibit was open. The legionnaires took their posts there to maintain a twenty-four-hour guard over almost two million dollars' worth of pictures. The crowds trooped in. The enthusiasm was heartening. Chauncey McCormick, famous Chicago collector and lender to the show, said that his own paintings had never been so well lit, that it was the best show outside of those held in a few great museums that he had ever seen. The *Daily Pantagraph* came out with a special issue of sixteen pages containing reproductions of forty of the paintings in the show. It was probably the most comprehensive press coverage of an exhibition in one newspaper that I have ever seen.

My most heartwarming experience was gained during the few days I remained to watch the show get off to a good start. In the morning the buses from the neighboring communities drove up with clockwork regularity and unloaded groups of children. Their teachers herded them together and took them through the galleries

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to pass before the pictures which had been carefully roped off. There, instructors and students in the art departments of the universities discussed the paintings. As the children trooped out, other waiting buses emptied. Expectant youngsters quickly filed into the galleries. In the afternoons and evenings the local citizens, neighboring farmers, and visitors from the whole of the Middle West, attracted by the national publicity, flocked to the exhibition. Instead of the few hundred I had been warned to expect, almost 50,000 visited an exhibition in a town of 30,000! It was so intensely a community affair that one was reminded of stories of the building of a cathedral in the Middle Ages.

The publicity was voluminous. Associated Press, United Press, International News Service, *Life*, *Time*, and *Newsweek* all covered the show. Chicago and St. Louis gave it front-page stories. Editorials were written, sermons preached. The great names aroused curiosity. The Rembrandt, Fragonard, Titian, Hals, Stuart, Homer, Gainsborough, Degas, Renoir, Bellows came in for immediate attention. But each picture was studied with an intensity that some city gallery-goers might well adopt. The contemporaries were by no means slighted. Wood's "American Gothic," Speicher's "Blue Necklace," Weber's "The Gorge," Gladys Rockmore Davis's "Reclining Figure," Sloan's "The White Way," a Cadmus self-portrait, Isabel Bishop's "The Kid," all were thoroughly examined and discussed.

The seeds planted have continued to grow. Visitors from Bloomington frequently drop in to see me. The Art Association is considerably more active and has held an important annual show in conjunction with Illinois Wesleyan University. Contemporary pictures have been purchased for the association's permanent collection. And in Raymond Wakeley's smart store, where New York's latest fashions are displayed, a small but fine collection of paintings by leading American painters decorates the walls of the show-rooms.

CHAPTER XVIII☛ The employment of fine art by business has shown a noticeable increase, and of late has been the subject of considerable discussion. Large corporations have bought artists' work for use in advertising or as a public-relations feature. De Beers, Capchart, Container Corporation, The Upjohn Company, United States Brewers, Encyclopaedia Britannica, International Business Machines Corporation, are names of some of the firms who have recently patronized the artist. The manner of use has varied. Capchart has commissioned leading artists to interpret familiar music classics. United States Brewers asked artists to depict seasonal sports gatherings where their product was sold. The Upjohn Company, for whom I have helped select paintings, differed in its approach by purchasing non-commissioned paintings from the gallery or artist's collection, and using the paintings to illustrate an educational health campaign. Chase and Sanborn Coffee has used Doris Rosenthal's painting of Guatemala. The Maxwell House Coffee campaign has reproduced familiar paintings of American landscape. Abbott Laboratories has commissioned artists to execute paintings for its magazine circulated among physicians. During the conflict, Abbott sent artists to the battlefields to paint the medical aspects of the war.

International Business Machines and Encyclopaedia Britannica have, on the other hand, formed large and important collections which have been widely circulated and which are eventually scheduled to go into museum collections. The paintings purchased have not been used for advertising but the resultant publicity has been excellent. Favorable tax deductions have helped make these ventures an advantageous and not too expensive investment in good will. The Pepsi-Cola Company has also been purchasing paintings, working out an extensive exhibition and prize competition program.



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Since I have had considerable experience over a period of years in the placing of fine art in advertising and in the collections of big business, I have been deeply concerned with the effects of this patronage. The varying reactions to this trend have interested me. There are obvious advantages in it for the artist. Most of the favorable comments have come from artists or those in constant contact with the artist. The financial advantage to the artist is obvious. The excellent purchase prices and reproduction fees have, through the various programs mentioned previously, added considerably to the all-too-low income of the American artist. I have never been a believer in the theory that an artist must starve in order to do his best work. Rather, I believe hunger has kept many artists from their best work and accounted for many a frustrated career and untimely death. Physical comfort and peace of mind are conducive to better work. If business patronage helps to provide these, it has benefited the artist.

In addition to the immediate financial increment there is another potent advantage for the artist. Through popular magazines in which the advertising is placed, the artist's work is spread before the eyes of millions, many of whom rarely, if ever, have seen fine painting. In the case of the Upjohn Company campaign, on which I have been working, a painting reproduced to illustrate one of the health messages appears during one month in four or five magazines with a combined readership of many millions. In the pages of the *Saturday Evening Post*, a magazine which has rarely reproduced the work of the American fine artist, there thus appear monthly excellent color reproductions of important examples by leading American painters. Thus, in spite of the magazine's editorial policy, its readers have an opportunity to see good art, to become more familiar and more receptive to it.

Another opportunity for a wider circulation of these reproductions was offered with the publication of a book by Upjohn containing color reproductions of the paintings used to illustrate the health

messages. Over 100,000 of these books were sent to every registered physician to be placed in the doctors' waiting rooms. Similarly, other campaigns add to the growing familiarity with the work of the best American painters. Capchart receives thousands of requests for reproductions of the paintings included in its advertisements. The museum exhibitions circuitized by Upjohn, International Business Machines Corporation, the Encyclopaedia Britannica, Abbott, Pepsi-Cola, Container Corporation, et cetera, add to this knowledge.

To object to the use of fine art in advertising because big business thereby hopes to secure added prestige and favorable publicity seems irrelevant. The Church used the artist to explain religion to the public. Many of the artists used were merely able illustrators. Others used the religious subject matter for the production of great art. The wealthy patrons of the Renaissance, as well as many of later date, were also not unaware of the enhanced glory reflected on them from the artists they subsidized, or from the works of art acquired for their collections.

Unquestionably, certain conditions were conducive to the greater use of fine art by business during the past years. Because of war work, many corporations found themselves with no products to sell. To maintain their trade-mark in the public mind over the war years, they turned to institutional advertising. For this purpose, fine artists were well suited, and they were employed in increasing numbers by advertising clients, who had feared them when the delineation of the actual product had been involved. Those businesses which rarely advertised any specific product saw the efficacy of such advertising for their own purposes and followed suit. The prevailing income-tax structure, favorable to corporation advertising, was also an incentive for the formation of large collections. The gift of such collections to public institutions and the resultant tax benefits have made the net cost of their acquisition to the companies very moderately priced. And the low-cost publicity and good will

have been of inestimable advantage to such organizations as Pepsi-Cola, International Business Machines Corporation, Encyclopædia Britannica, and the others. If this works to the benefit of the artist and the general cultural level of the country, I see no reason to object to the rise of a new patron to take the place of others long since disappeared.

Needless to say there are pitfalls, too, for the artist. But it is the artist alone who has within himself control of the evils which may beset him. The artist of talent and integrity is always confronted with the same dilemma—should he paint popular ready-selling pictures, potboilers, they are called—to make living easier, or should he retain his integrity and paint that which he believes best expresses himself, regardless of the immediate financial return? Naturally every artist hopes there will be eventual recognition of his talent by a perceptive minority. A similar problem is posed in the employment of the artist by big business. If the artist is desired because of the fresh approach his individual style offers, but finds himself so limited and restricted that his identity is lost and the result deplorable from his own point of view, he may refuse to complete the job. The Lucky Strike campaign has been cited everywhere as an example of limitations which so handicapped the artists that the resultant efforts were in the majority of cases quite inferior. Many advertising directors have told me that the poor impression created by this campaign deterred their clients from using fine artists.

Yet too much success in this field may also be of disadvantage to the artist. The returns may be too inviting, the jobs offered too frequent. Gradually the painter finds it difficult to concentrate on his serious struggle for personal creative expression. The dealer can be very helpful at this time if he thinks more of the artist's future than his own immediate gain. I have seen in recent years a number of promising and even established painters end up as run-of-the-mill commercial artists. This is by no means a reflec-

tion on the artists in the commercial field. There are many extremely able men doing commercial work today. Some of these are also painting excellent creative works for exhibition, managing somehow to differentiate in their approach to commercial and fine art or sometimes to break down the dividing line between them. It is a difficult task, however, as many of my lunch-hour visitors, artists and art directors from the various nearby advertising agencies, sadly admit.

The use of non-commissioned paintings eliminates most of the difficulties mentioned earlier. Taste in presentation is, however, of vital necessity. It is important that the paintings employed be treated with merited respect. But in this matter some of our writers have been more captious than the artist himself. The pictures included in collections being formed by the business organizations also have in most cases been widely shown under the best auspices and are eventually destined for museums or comparable public collections. The growing IBM collection has been shown at the two world's fair exhibitions and in various South American countries. The Upjohn collection is on a lengthy tour of the nation's museums. Encyclopaedia Britannica's impressive collection will someday go to the University of Chicago. It will be reproduced in a volume of the Encyclopaedia and is currently attracting thousands to exhibitions in the large city museums.

The Pepsi-Cola Company's venture into the fine arts field is a very ambitious program. For several years Pepsi-Cola had been using reproductions of fine paintings on the 750,000 calendars it has annually distributed. In 1944 Walter Mack, Jr., president of the company, proposed a plan for a prize competition by American artists. An exhibition selected from the work of the competing artists was to be widely shown. Prizes were to be awarded and the work of the winners reproduced on the Pepsi-Cola calendar. Desiring to retain impartiality, Mr. Mack turned the whole matter over to the Artists for Victory organization, a war-born amalgame-

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tion of various art societies. A selection jury of artists waded through the thousands of paintings submitted. Another jury, composed of artists, museum directors, and critics, then awarded the substantial prizes. The exhibition was first shown at the Metropolitan Museum, then sent on a road-show tour. In 1945 a similar show followed. Pepsi-Cola was more cautious this time. Twenty prizes were awarded, allowing more of a choice in the selection of the twelve paintings for calendar reproductions.

Unfortunately artists' politics, a poor selection system, and bad New York presentations, brought criticism of the exhibitions, despite commendation of the company's efforts. Dissatisfied, Mr. Mack decided to clean house and start over again. He invited Roland McKinney, director of the Los Angeles Museum and one of the country's most respected museum officials, to take charge of an even more elaborate program. In addition to having revitalized a moribund institution at Los Angeles, McKinney had personally selected the American exhibition at the 1939 San Francisco World's Fair. This show has been termed one of the finest American exhibitions held in this country. Therefore he was an excellent choice.

A new selection system was inaugurated. Seven regional juries were appointed to cull out the best paintings from the various sections of the country for final selection by a national jury. This seems like an intelligent approach to the jury system and should provide challenging shows. The recent announcement that in addition to prize awards, fellowships would be offered by Pepsi-Cola to worthy artists, one for each of the seven regions, has also attracted wide approval.

This gesture follows the lead of the Guggenheim Foundation, which has for many years lent a helping hand to some of this country's most talented painters. I remember with great pleasure a visit to my galleries by the late Simon Guggenheim, donor of the fellowships. With Mrs. Guggenheim, he had come to view the Doris Ro-

senthal exhibition of paintings of Mexico. Miss Rosenthal had been enabled to visit Mexico as a result of a Guggenheim award.

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"It's very pleasant," Mr. Guggenheim remarked to me, "to see, during my lifetime, how profitably my money is being used by these excellent artists."

The Rosenwald Foundation's fellowships, both to Negro artists and to sympathetic painters of Negro life, have also been rewarding, as can be seen in the work of several artists here reproduced. Thus the Guggenheim mines, the Sears, Roebuck catalogues, and a nickel drink are put to use in behalf of American painting.

CHAPTER XIX☛ Lester Longman, head of the progressive art department at Iowa State University, visited me one day. He was here to select a summer exhibition of contemporary American painting. This was to be the second of a recently inaugurated annual series of shows to provide students an opportunity to see the latest and best work being done in this country. Mr. Longman told me that he had visited forty-seven New York galleries in his quest for the work of American painters. It had not occurred to me that there were so many places where the American artist may show his work. Admittedly, some of these galleries show only an occasional American picture, but the fact that they do so at all is encouraging.

Today there are many established concerns definitely concentrating on the promotion of the work of our living artists. Most of these galleries are represented by reproductions in this volume. They comprise a group of serious individuals who, by reason of good taste, courage, and perseverance, have helped raise the level of art in this country. Many have selected unknown artists, groomed them, often aided them financially, and encouraged them to continue until they have won acceptance. A mixture of idealism and practical business sense is usually involved in the make-up of the

reputable dealer. While the progressive ones realize that art must be effectively merchandized, there is an awareness of the fact that a gallery works with highly sensitive individuals who merit treatment as such. Anyone who truly respects the work of art and its creator will not attempt to merchandise art in the same manner as a department-store product.

There are many unexplored avenues for the development of a far greater clientele than we have today. I have tried many. But that increased number of picture buyers will result only from efforts based on quality and integrity, both on the part of the artist and his dealer. This begins to sound like an attempt to justify the existence of the art impresario. The reputable dealer needs no defense. But I do think he has been given too little recognition for his strenuous and often ill-rewarded activities in discovering the art that illumines our art pages and decorates our homes and museum walls.

There is always a group on the fringe of every profession who besmirch the reputation of their colleagues. Law, medicine, music, and the theater abound with them. So, too, it is in art. Art dealing has been made a profession by the dignity and high character of leaders in the field who more than offset the activities of the irresponsible.

There are dealers who have become engaged in this type of work more by accident than as a result of any regard or respect for the art they sell. I have spent many evenings listening to out-of-town visitors describe the activities of the so-called suitcase dealers who tour the smaller cities of the Midwest, the South, and the Far West. Exhibiting old paintings with very questionable attributions, they often make a killing among the wealthy collectors who are all looking for a picture with a famous name at a bargain price.

It would be amusing if it were not pathetic, this gullibility of some of our hard-headed businessmen. Their pride in the famous

masterpiece they have purchased at an astounding reduction overawes the local townspeople, until some artist or museum man drops in to disillusion the proud owner and tell him how badly he has been duped. There has been so much of this in the Southwest, and in California, that even the most reliable dealer has had to overcome the wary suspicion of those who have been bilked.

The contemporary dealer rarely needs to worry about the question of authenticity, but the problems of running a gallery devoted to living artists are manifold. This is especially true of galleries which do not confine themselves to the work of artists already established by others, but which are willing to gamble on new artists. Two researchers on the staff of *Fortune* magazine recently came to interview me. They were in the process of securing material for an exhaustive article on the art galleries. We spent some time discussing the various questions which came to their minds. It developed, however, that they were having an extremely difficult time getting a clear-cut picture of New York's art mart because of the veil of secrecy in certain quarters and braggadocio in others.

Aside from the financial risk involved, the dealer has to be domestic advisor, father confessor, critic, banker, publicist, and a hundred-and-one other things to his artist through, at best, a sixteen-hour day. There are consolations—discovering a brilliant new talent, selling a picture for an artist who badly needs the funds or the encouragement, or disposing of a work to a museum or discerning collector. There is also the very gratifying satisfaction of seeing the artist win a national award or fellowship. And rewarding indeed is the arrival in the gallery of an exciting new painting from the artist wherein continued progress is indicated. That is sufficient return.

The steady and increasing growth of interest in the work of American painters is a source of great comfort to all of us who have been striving for this through these many years. It is especially pleasant to see the recent influx of new buyers competing with those



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who have been regularly collecting over the years. It has been estimated that in the last two or three years a goodly percentage of the art purchasers has been newcomers—people acquiring their first painting or sculpture. The causes of this sudden spurt of acquisitive interest are varied. The many efforts cited have had their cumulative effect. The plenitude of money, of course, has contributed. Those who have long wished to buy paintings have suddenly become sufficiently affluent to accomplish their desires. Others with unaccustomed and soaring incomes have included pictures in their spending sprees. The fact that automobiles, refrigerators, new homes and the like were not purchasable, siphoned some of these excess funds in the direction of paintings. Lacking motive power, many, perforce, had to sit home. Blank and unattractive walls may have depressed them and sent them off to look for paintings to decorate their rooms and make their enforced stay at home more entertaining.

The first purchase is always the most difficult. Invariably it leads to another. Even though funds are more limited in the postwar years, it may be assumed from past experience that the new collectors will make a special effort to continue their acquisitions. Some insidious virus, for which no antidote can be found, seems to enter the system after the first picture is brought home. The proud buyer reads all the available literature concerning the creator of the painting in his possession. He attends, when possible, every exhibition in which his particular artist is represented. He goes to museums to see how the painting he owns compares with other examples by the artist to be found in public collections. While thus engaged he discovers other paintings by the same artist or by different artists, which he feels he must also own. He has noticed that his first purchase, earth shaking though it may have been at the time, has not permanently deflated his bank account, alienated his wife, or lost him his friends. Some of the neighbors may consider him slightly balmy, although this opinion appears to be tinged with



*People on 6th Avenue*

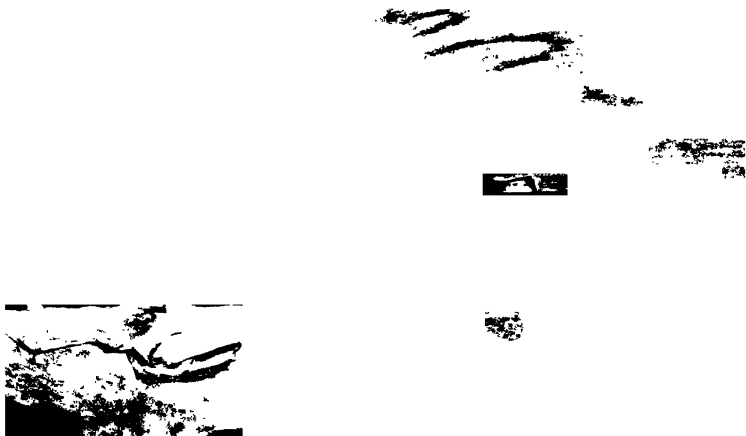
*Two Houses, by Walter Stuephig*





*At the Bazaar*, by Maurice Steno





*Rendezvous*, by Robert Phillip





*Wind*, by Sol Wilson



*Portrait of a Painter*, by Frederic Land  
*Copy of the Enschneider portrait, c. 1870*



*Butte Utah, by Adolf Dohn*

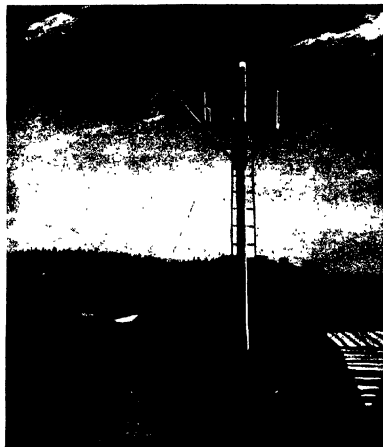
*Famly*





*Night*, by Charles F. Burchfield

*Sea Cross*, by Stephen





*Subway Platform, I*





*Lighthouse Point*, by Joseph de Martin

*Air Raid*, by Van



a curious respect for his courage. The second purchase is so much less difficult. From then on the man is lost, for there will always be spots in his home which need pictures.

But what he has lost, paradoxically he has gained in the enrichment of his life. I have seen whole families change and get so much more out of life as they permitted the pictures in their home to react upon them. In the galleries we have an excellent opportunity to get to know people in the process of helping them form their collections. There are all types—from the neighboring stenographer who buys a ten-dollar lithograph, paying for it at the rate of \$1.00 a week, to the wealthy banker who spends several thousand dollars for a painting. There is the cafeteria worker who has gathered a large collection of small pictures by steady installment payments out of his limited income and the Hollywood celebrity who is constantly adding to her collection.

Several years ago I took a group of paintings with me on a trip to the film capital. The interest in paintings in Hollywood had not yet reached its present proportions. There were a few collectors who were mostly interested in the highly publicized foreign artists. This was primarily a pleasure trip, however, so I arranged my paintings on the apartment walls, notified the local critics who came and were very enthusiastic, and then proceeded to the task of improving my badminton game on an adjoining court. Among my most enthusiastic guests were the local baker and the flower vendor. Each day they asked if they could come in to see the pictures. They examined each painting carefully, then thanked me profusely. The occasional distortions bothered them not at all. Eventually collectors came and bought, making the experiment financially worth while. But the reactions of the baker and the flower vendor, undisturbed by inhibitions, were the most gratifying.

Since that time many of the unsold pictures I had with me have gone into important collections. One is hanging in the Metropolitan Museum, another in the Brooklyn Museum. And many Hollywood

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notables who couldn't find time to visit the exhibition when it was in their back yard have come into the gallery in New York to buy pictures by the same artists.

CHAPTER XX§ The artists' contribution, however, is greater than the aesthetic enjoyment they furnish us. These men and women, through their creative work, provide a humanizing influence that free art inevitably brings to mankind. Governments disappear, boundaries change, but the free expression of man's aesthetic impulses transcends all temporal limitations, and belongs to all men for all time. Dictators attempt to confine this expression, to prescribe its content, but the tyrants fall and the artist comes forth unbowed.

When the Nazis took over Germany, free art disappeared. Art was made to conform to the sentimentalized dictates of an unsuccessful Viennese painter. I often think of a beautifully written column by the sorely missed Heywood Brown. The writer reflected on the change in world affairs which might have resulted if the young would-be artist had received encouragement rather than derision from the artists and writers who frequented the coffeehouses of Vienna. Instead of going in for politics that led to the Wilhelmstrasse, a world conflict and his nation's eventual collapse, Herr Schicklegrüber might have lived out his life as a second-rate painter selling mediocre scenes of Vienna to tourists.

When France was overrun by the Germans, many of the French artists went underground. Emlen Etting, the artist of those stirring *gouaches* of the "Road to Paris," entered Paris with Leclerc's liberating army. He was the first American to broadcast from the French underground radio station, and had an opportunity to visit many of the French artists who had survived the occupation. They presented him with a portfolio of lithographs which had been clandestinely printed and circulated unsigned. The drama, the emo-

tional quality, and the defiance in these works by artists, some of whom had disappeared, give brilliant evidence of the impossibility of stifling the arts.

Whatever one may think of the importance of Picasso's "Guer-nica" as either a work of art or propaganda, one must admire the artist's independence when visited by the conquering Germans. When his visitors left his studio, he gave them as souvenirs post-card reproductions of the mural which the artist had painted as a protest against the German destruction of defenseless Spanish civilians.

The artists continued their painting during these trying times whenever possible and with whatever materials were available. When the curtain over Europe was lifted, we heard of exhibitions showing new experiments in painting, new progress. I recently received a request from representatives of a group of Dutch artists who desired art materials be sent them. They will paint, and in their painting their experiences will eventually be seen, not necessarily in the subject matter, but in their approach to the subject, whether it be a still life or a painting of concentration-camp horrors.

We here in this country are similarly affected by the terrific strain of the war years, by the uncertainties which now confront us as man's scientific investigations have unleashed dangers which man must either control or be destroyed.

Attempts to create international co-operation have clashed with self-interest, and the road to future wars has opened wide again. In their fear and uncertainty many people turn to art, seeking in the balance—the equilibrium of artful perfection—an approach to life unfettered by material limitations. The person who can appreciate and see beauty in a Mayan idol, a Hokusai print, a Breughel landscape, a Fra Angelico, a Tintoretto, a Goya, an Orozco mural, a Roualt clown, and in the work of the artists reproduced here, has the capacity to understand and collaborate with other peoples of the world.

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Art is an international, a universal language enabling nations to comprehend each other. In its art each nation expresses its peculiar character. This character is affected by environment and by its heritage. Though subject to conflicting outside influences, its particular identity is still retained. It is not chauvinism but a measure of self-respect to look for the highest attainment in the artists of our own land and to encourage the realization of a great and truly indigenous art. We can then, on a level of equality, return those influences we have often borrowed, for the ultimate good of all. Just as our architects, our composers, our scientists and men of medicine are now bringing new progress into fields so long pre-empted by foreign lands, so will our artists create and develop new forms. This will come sooner if our writers, our museum officials, and those influenced by them will cultivate a spirit of encouragement for our native artists and will discard the snobbish, patronizing attitude affected by a few.

When art is made a living and vital force in the daily pattern of our lives, then will our lives be of greater worth to us. A serious interest in painting can never be confined to an interest in pictures. It affects our reaction to everything with which we come in contact. We see with new vision our homes, our furniture, our clothes. We react differently because we have become accustomed to looking at nature through the eyes of men of taste, of selectivity. Objects heretofore admired suddenly become banal, grotesque.

Several museums sensing this reaction have installed sections where visitors may see and examine objects in daily use which represent the best in contemporary design. Visitors at the Museum of Modern Art, after touring the galleries, find themselves in a room where objects ranging from typewriters to egg beaters are shown. These may be purchasable at the local five-and-ten-cent store, or may be de luxe objects from the studio of a leading industrial designer. At the Walker Art Center in Minneapolis, an Everyday Art Gallery has recently been installed to accomplish a similar purpose.

To quote from the gallery's announcement: "New materials and techniques with which to build a better environment for ourselves are again within our reach. This environment includes an endless variety of things with which we are in daily contact: houses and other buildings, vehicles and furniture, fountain pens and frying pans, doorknobs and drinking glasses. All these objects, whether large or small, have a far-reaching influence on our well-being. There is no need to tolerate inconvenience and ugliness in any one of them."

The manufacturers are eager to work with such organizations. New and original products are the life blood of business. Many experiment with better designed products but too often discard them if unsuccessful commercially with the age-old excuse that they have to give the public what they want. If through the efforts of galleries of everyday art the public is directed to better designed objects, manufacturers will be encouraged to continue along these lines, thus improving the general quality.

The complete fabric of today's living is in process of change due to technological advances. By reason of new mechanical inventions man is gradually attaining more leisure for cultural pursuits. Art can help to enrich these leisure hours.

The painter has many opportunities to help in this betterment and at the same time add to the general familiarity with his work. Some years ago the Steuben Glass organization commissioned a group of artists to design patterns for its glass, incorporating artists' designs. Mats, playing cards, and countless other objects have given the artist an outlet and the consumer new beauty in his home. The American Artist Group, under the direction of Sam Golden, has raised the level of the Christmas card by employing color reproductions of well-selected American paintings. At the same time he has afforded the givers and recipients of such cards an opportunity to know the work of our American painters. The series of

## PAINTING IN THE U.S.A.

inexpensive monographs on our leading contemporaries recently published by Golden furthers still more this effort.

Our smartly dressed women this winter will wear fabrics designed by American painters as a result of a project on which I have been occupied for some time. Working from sketches produced by a group of Midtown artists, the Onondaga Silk Company has manufactured an exciting array of dress materials which will be shown by leading dressmakers and women's shops throughout the country.

These are all aids in improving the general level of taste and in bringing art to a wider public. But members of this wider audience sought for the artist must in turn make some effort of their own to procure the enjoyment they seek. There will be no lightly turned key to understanding. No writer or lecturer will unfold the beauty of painting with a few well-chosen words. Words are as inadequate in describing the emotional response to a painting as they are in describing the taste of a rare vintage of wine, the peculiar savor of an unfamiliar sauce. While reading a beautifully written review of a painting, I have often stopped suddenly. "Just what does it mean?" I asked myself. Carried away by the flow of aptly put together words, I had been enjoying an essay, another form of creative expression, rather than securing a comprehensible approach to a work of art which the writer of the essay had probably enjoyed.

Let the painting itself be the instructor. Approach the task with humility, tolerance, and perseverance. I speak of the word task, when it is really an exciting adventure that exercises all the sensations, both intuitive and intellectual, of a mind soon relieved of daily worries and inhibitions.

If the reproductions have long since waylaid many readers of this volume and turned their attention to thoughts of the original paintings, the volume will have served its purpose. If others have borne with me to this point, been regaled by my often wandering observations on painting in this country and have been similarly induced to

look more keenly at the riches freely available to them, the satisfaction will be mutual. An approach to the work of our living artist, predicated on genuine respect for his accomplishments and knowledge of the heritage which has helped produce him, will do much for the observer, and at the same time encourage our artists ceaselessly to continue their struggle for perfection.

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EXHIBITION LIST☛ Books on art for the layman often provide a bibliography or suggestions for additional reading. This is helpful, and I have indicated sources for further reading. However, since I have continually stressed the importance of viewing original paintings, I consider it even more important that a book on art written for the layman should contain a schedule of exhibitions where paintings may be seen. I am accordingly listing a series of exhibitions which present annually or biennially important examples of the work of leading contemporary American painters. Such a list obviously cannot be all-inclusive, since exhibition schedules vary. It also cannot include the itineraries of traveling exhibitions, or the state and city shows and the many exhibitions of the work of leading artists planned from time to time by museums throughout the country. The various art magazines keep their readers informed concerning such exhibitions, and your neighboring museum will be glad to apprise you of its schedule of activities.

ALBANY, NEW YORK

*Albany Institute of History and Art, American Drawing Annual* February–March

ATLANTA, GEORGIA

*High Museum of Art, Southeastern States Annual Exhibition* October–November

CHICAGO, ILLINOIS

*The Art Institute of Chicago, Annual Exhibition of American Painting and Sculpture: November–December*

## EXHIBITION LIST

- COLORADO SPRINGS, COLORADO**  
*Colorado Springs Fine Arts Center, Annual Exhibition of Artists West of the Mississippi: March-April*
- DALLAS, TEXAS**  
*Dallas Museum of Fine Arts, Contemporary American Painting and Sculpture:*
- INDIANAPOLIS, INDIANA**  
*John Herron Art Institute, Contemporary American Painting, December-January*
- IOWA CITY, IOWA**  
*The State University of Iowa, Summer Exhibition of Contemporary Art*
- LINCOLN, NEBRASKA**  
*Nebraska Art Association, University of Nebraska, Annual Exhibition of Contemporary Art, March*
- LOS ANGELES, CALIFORNIA**  
*Los Angeles County Museum, Biennial Exhibition of Drawings by American Artists, February-April*
- MINNEAPOLIS, MINNESOTA**  
*Walker Art Center, Annual Exhibition American Painting: August-September*
- NEW YORK, NEW YORK**  
*Whitney Museum of American Art, Annual Exhibition of Paintings: November-December*  
*National Academy of Design, Annual Exhibition: December*
- OMAHA, NEBRASKA**  
*Joslyn Memorial Art Gallery, Six States Exposition: December*
- PALM BEACH, FLORIDA**  
*Society of The Four Arts, Annual Exhibition: Winter*
- PHILADELPHIA, PA.**  
*Pennsylvania Academy of the Fine Arts, Annual Exhibition of Paintings and Sculpture, January*
- PITTSBURGH, PA.**  
*Carnegie Institute, Department of Fine Arts, Painting in the United States (Carnegie International): October-December*
- POMONA, CALIFORNIA**  
*Los Angeles County Fair, Local and National: September (resumed in 1947)*
- RICHMOND, VIRGINIA**  
*Virginia Museum of Fine Arts, Biennial Exhibition of American Painting: March-April*
- ST. LOUIS, MISSOURI**  
*City Art Museum of St. Louis, American Painting Today: February-March*

## EXHIBITION LIST

### SAINT PAUL, MINNESOTA

*Minnesota State Fair, Local and National Exhibits: August-September*

### SAN DIEGO, CALIFORNIA

*Fine Arts Gallery of San Diego, Annual Exhibition for Southern California  
Artists: June-September*

### SOUTHEASTERN MUSEUM CIRCUIT

*Eleven Southeastern Museums, Annual Exhibition of Contemporary American  
Painting*

### SPRINGFIELD, MASSACHUSETTS

*Museum of Fine Arts, Annual Spring Purchase Show: May*

### TOLEDO, OHIO

*Toledo Museum of Art, Annual Exhibition of Selected American Paintings  
June-August*

### WASHINGTON, D.C.

*Corcoran Gallery of Art, Biennial Exhibition of Contemporary American  
Paintings: March-April*

### YOUNGSTOWN, OHIO

*Butler Art Institute, Annual Five States Show: January*

*Also exhibitions circuitied nationally by American Federation of Arts, Museum of  
Modern Art, Midtown Galleries, Pepsi-Cola's Paintings of the Year, Encyclopaedia  
Britannica Collection, The Upjohn Company Collection, et cetera.*



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